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# THE TIMES

INTERNATIONAL EDITION  
JORDAN  
BERLIN  
VIENNA

No 64,256

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15 1992

45p

## Blue Arrow advisers guilty after £35m trial



Stainforth: acquitted of conspiracy to defraud

By BILL FROST AND MATTHEW BOND

FOUR former City advisers to the Blue Arrow employment agency were yesterday convicted of conspiracy to defraud at the end of an Old Bailey trial that lasted more than a year and cost an estimated £35 million. A fifth man was acquitted.

The hearing was adjourned until Monday when Mr Justice McKinnon is expected to pass sentence. All four remain on bail.

The jury was told that the four men deliberately misled the market at the time of Blue Arrow's record £837 million rights issue so that the recruitment group could take over Manpower, a larger American employment company. The conspirators concealed vital information which showed that the rights issue of shares had been "a flop".

The case was the most expensive

criminal trial to be held in Britain. Chichester Rents, the Old Bailey annex, was converted into courtrooms especially for the 187-day hearing. Jury members were estimated to have received about £15,000 each in attendance allowances and monthly fees for each legal team are thought to have reached about £100,000.

The four men found guilty on unanimous verdicts were Jonathan Cohen, aged 48, deputy chief executive of NatWest Investment Bank and chief executive of County NatWest at the time of the rights issue; David Reed, aged 44, former executive and managing director of corporate finance at County NatWest; Nicholas Wells, aged 37, former County NatWest executive director and a former member of the corporate advisory department; and Martin Gibbs, aged 62, former director of UBS Phillips & Drew. Christopher Stainforth, aged 38, a former director of UBS Phillips & Drew corporate finance, was acquitted.

The convictions will come as a relief in a week of mixed fortunes for the Serious Fraud Office and Barbara Mills, its outgoing head and director-designate of public prosecutions. The verdicts followed a direction by the judge for the jury to acquit three corporate defendants and two other City advisers. The collapse of the second Guinness trial caused the office some embarrassment, but the case against Peter Clowes produced a conviction and ten-year jail sentence.

The Blue Arrow events were symptomatic of how competitive the City of London had become after Big Bang in 1986. For a comparatively new operation such as County NatWest, the Blue Arrow rights issue was a unique opportunity to deal in the corporate finance big

time. For UBS Phillips & Drew, Blue Arrow's stockbroker, the stakes were almost as high. The rights issue ran into trouble quite unexpectedly, however, as the stock market began to show signs of weakness.

On the evening of September 27, 1987, the rights issue deadline, the Blue Arrow advisers met to hear how it had fared. The news was disastrous: only 38 per cent of the issue had been taken up. If the huge rump of the issue passed to underwriters, both County and NatWest faced huge bills and a considerable loss of reputation. The advisers decided the only alternative was to persuade the City that the issue had been a success, which would enable the remaining shares to be placed with institutions eager to buy what they believed was a well-supported stock. What was needed was a rights issue take-up of nearer 50 per cent.

The jury was told that the advisers

secretly bought millions of shares after the deadline passed. In just a few hours, the rights issue had become a comparative success, but every institution that subsequently bought shares did so in the belief that the take-up had been 48.9 per cent. The market had been misled. Prices slumped, however, after the stock market crash in October 1987 and the secret investment had to be accounted for.

Nicholas Purnell, QC, who led the Serious Fraud Office prosecution team, said the conspiracy amounted to the "most arrogant disregard for market practices... These men, confronted by the failure of the issue and the loss of reputation decided the solution was to cheat. They set out to rig the market." Defence lawyers argued that the men were legitimately supporting their client.

End of an era, page 18

## Ukraine defiant at Minsk summit

# Yeltsin struggles to stop collapse of Soviet army

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW AND ROBERT SEELY IN MINSK

HOPES of keeping together the armed forces of the former Soviet Union were fading last night as Ukraine clashed with Russia over its insistence on keeping virtually all its troops separate from any unified command.

Tass reported yesterday that six Russian crews of the former Soviet air force have defected from Ukraine with their aircraft rather than take an oath to defend the newly independent state. The aircraft, none of them armed, took off without permission from an air base near

Starokonstantinov and landed in neighbouring Belarusia, Tass said. They continued to a base outside Moscow. "The planes did not have their armaments, but the pilots brought with them their regimental banner," the news agency said.

Relations between the republics were further poisoned by a threat from Aleksandr Rutskoi, the Russian vice-president, to take harsh economic sanctions against any states that discriminated against ethnic Russians.

President Yeltsin's deputy, a strident conservative who on Thursday was given new responsibilities for agriculture in the hope of neutralising his attacks on the government, also described as criminal his own administration's economic policies.

Speaking to ITN yesterday morning, he said: "A government that cannot feed its people, where school children are going hungry, and old people have to rummage through dustbins for food... is criminal and should be put on trial."

While the Russian government is technically headed by Boris Yeltsin himself, Mr Rutskoi appeared to be directing his attack at the cabinet and its day-to-day managers of government policy, such as the deputy prime minister, Yegor Gaidar.

## Scandal hits Japan

Prosecutors in Japan arrested four businessmen allegedly involved in a new scandal.

The arrests followed raids on the homes of former executives of Sagawa Kyubin, a delivery group, in another scandal involving Inagawa-kai, the country's second-biggest gangster outfit. Page 11

## City lights

Sunderland has been made Britain's newest city by order of the Queen, to mark the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne. Page 2

## Single-minded

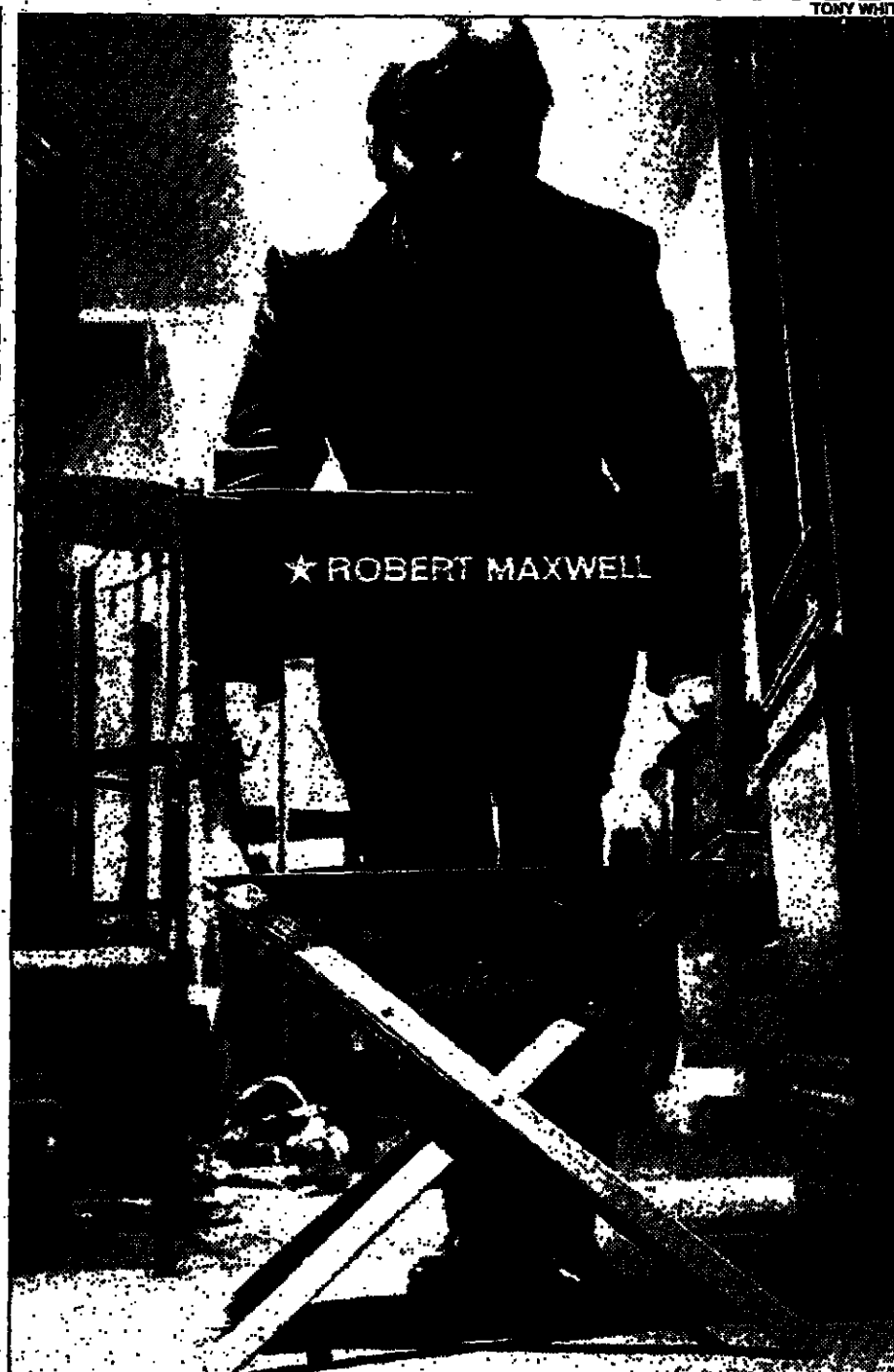
EC officials and counterparts from the European Free Trade Association stitched back together an agreement to create a single market. Page 8

## Box prison

Stephanie Slater, the kidnapped estate agent, was blindfolded, bound and locked in a wooden box by her abductor. Page 3

## Sweet success

Alan Sugar, Amstrad's chairman, earned more after school and at weekends than his father earned all week. Profile, page 19



An unknown buyer paid £800 for a director's chair, believed to have been a gift from the White House, at the auction of contents from the tycoon Robert Maxwell's London flat. Scandal suite, page 2, Tabloid bids, page 10

## Anti-hunting bill is beaten amid uproar in Commons

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

AN ATTEMPT to outlaw fox-hunting was narrowly defeated yesterday as Conservative MPs, including most of the cabinet, voted down a private member's bill after an emotional Commons debate.

Kevin McNamara's Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, which has been at the centre of a vigorous campaign by the pro and anti hunting lobbies, was refused a second reading by 187 votes to 175, a majority of 12, after a free vote.

The result was received in near-uproar by one of the biggest Friday attendances in recent years, with clapping from the public gallery and cries of "shame" from the bill's supporters.

The outcome was so close

that few believe the argument has been settled. The Labour front-bench gave its strongest commitment to ban fox-hunting if elected.

Twenty six Conservative MPs, including two ministers and two whips, supported Mr McNamara's bill for Hull Northern Ireland secretary. His bill would have banned hunting with hounds of foxes, stags and hares, and outlawed snares used by gamekeepers to control pests.

The prime minister was not in the Commons but the cabinet vote turned out to be decisive. Those who opposed the bill were Michael Heseltine, environment secretary, Norman Lamont,

chancellor, John Wakeham, energy secretary, Kenneth Clarke, health secretary, John Gummer, agriculture minister, Michael Howard, employment secretary, Peter Lilley, industry secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, transport secretary, Tom King, defence secretary, David Hunt, Welsh secretary, William Waldegrave, health secretary, Peter Brooke, Northern Ireland secretary, and Ian Lang, Scottish secretary. Two Liberal Democrats, Alan Beith and Mervyn Campbell, opposed the bill.

After the vote Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Conservative MP for

## Inflation fall gives ministers a boost

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

INFLATION has fallen to just above 4 per cent, strengthening hopes among Conservative MPs of a cut in interest rates before the general election and bringing some relief to ministers from a succession of gloomy economic figures.

Yesterday's good news on prices, with a bigger than expected drop from 4.5 per cent to 4.1 per cent in January, was marred, however, by another round of bleak production figures. Manufacturing output fell 1.2 per cent between the third and fourth quarters of last year with a total drop of 5 per cent over the year. It has now fallen for six consecutive quarters.

Yesterday's figures came in the wake of unwelcome news on unemployment, house repossessions and company losses. But they led Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, to declare that victory over inflation was in sight.

John Smith, his Labour shadow, said that the drop in inflation had been bought at the price of recession and soaring unemployment. Inflation, he added, was being suppressed rather than defeated.

The fall in inflation was helped by heavy price cuts in

Continued on page 16, col 8

Recession deepens, page 17

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### SAVING SOULS



Will the Salvation Army ever march to victory? Saturday Review Page 4

### CHILDHOOD REVISITED



Singer Lorna Luft looks back Saturday Review Page 38

### RURAL RITUAL



Suffolk-dweller Neil Lyndon laments an annual invasion Weekend Times Page 1

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## Hiroshima shattered spirits of Hitler scientists

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

SECRET recordings of Hitler's nuclear scientists, made when they were prisoners of war in England in 1945, reveal that they were shattered and appalled when they heard the news of the bombing of Hiroshima.

The recordings, made at Farm Hall, near Cambridge, in August 1945, were released yesterday by the Public Records Office, after representations from the presidents of the Royal Society and the British Academy. They will provide priceless evidence in the long argument over why the Germans failed to make a bomb.

The transcripts show that, at first, the scientists refused to believe what

they had been told. Once convinced, their reactions varied. Several, including Otto Hahn and Karl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker, expressed relief that the Germans had not got the bomb first. Walter Gerlach, who ran the German research effort, went to his room, lay on the bed and sobbed. He had to be encouraged from attempting suicide.

Hahn, the co-discoverer of nuclear fission, was the first to be told. The intelligence officer responsible, Major Hugh Rittner, records: "He was completely shattered, and said that he felt personally responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people." Hahn was so upset that Rittner had to ply him with alcohol before he was calm enough to go into

dinner and tell the others. The news was greeted with incredulity. Werner Heisenberg said: "All I can suggest is that some dilettante in America who knows little about it has bluffed them in saying 'If you drop this. It will have the equivalent of 20,000 tonnes of TNT,' and, in reality, it doesn't work at all." Hahn replied: "At any rate, Heisenberg, you're just second-raters and you may as well pack up." Heisenberg said: "I quite agree."

Von Weizäcker said that he thought the bombing was madness. Heisenberg responded: "One can't say that. One could equally well say that's the quickest way of ending the war." Hahn agreed. "That's what consoles me," he said.

The scientists went on to discuss

whether they could have made the bomb if they had tried harder. Heisenberg said that he had never thought they could, and "at the bottom of my heart, I was really glad". Von Weizäcker said: "If we had started this business soon enough, we could have got somewhere. We might have had the luck to complete it in the winter of 1944-5." Karl Wirtz responded: "The result would have been that we would have obliterated London and still not have conquered the world, and then they would have dropped them on us."

Von Weizäcker made the same point: "One can say that it might have been a much greater tragedy for the world if Germany had had the

Continued on page 16, col 1



# Sunderland casts off ailing past to win city status

SUNDERLAND, the former ship-building town in the North-East now better known for its links with Nissan, the Japanese car maker, yesterday became Britain's newest city.

Sunderland beat 22 rivals to receive the honour, granted on the personal command of the Queen as a mark of special distinction to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

The new city, population 296,100, has been trying for 60 years to achieve that status and has been turned down four times. Yesterday's announcement means that it will no longer live in the shadow of its more dominant neighbour, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Local dignitaries celebrated with a champagne toast and flag-raising ceremony on the steps of

the modern civic centre. They intend to invite the Queen to pay an official visit.

David Thompson, the mayor, said: "I can hardly believe it. It hasn't sunk in properly yet. The effect on the people of Sunderland will be immeasurable and the impact on the image of Sunderland throughout the world will be invaluable."

Sunderland, birthplace in the seventh century of the Venerable Bede and, in 1828, of Joseph Swan, inventor of the electric light, was the biggest of 14 towns formally invited last summer to put themselves forward for the honour of city status. Others also sent in applications.

The Labour-run council based its application on the town's contribution to national life, and

The birthplace of the electric light bulb and the Venerable Bede has been given new cause to celebrate at the expense of 22 rivals, Peter Davenport writes

emphasised its new found prosperity after the despair brought about by the collapse of the shipbuilding industry on the River Wear.

In its formal application it said: "Sunderland is proud of its past and of the way it has never succumbed to the fierce extremes of economic adversity which have so often been its historic lot. After a decade or so of painful reconstruction, Sunderland's economy and environment have been transformed, an achievement of almost miraculous proportions."

Nissan's decision to set up a car

manufacturing plant in 1984 was the catalyst for economic regeneration. The current workforce is 3,400, due to rise to 4,600 next year when 175,000 cars a year will roll off the production line. By then total investment by the Japanese company will stand at some £900 million. Other firms have followed.

John Nielsen of Nissan said yesterday: "We are absolutely delighted at the honour given to Sunderland. We can now call it our home city instead of our home town. If we have played a part in the decision to upgrade the status

then we are thrilled." Sunderland has not always enjoyed the best of reputations. It has been the butt of music hall comedians and the painter L.S. Lowry used some of its stark, urban and industrial landscapes as backdrops for several of his "matchstick men" works.

Yesterday's announcement came the day after a reminder that life was still far from easy in the area; two miners were killed in an accident at the local colliery, Wearmouth.

Sunderland, whose motto is "With God as our leader there is no cause for despair", was ranked as ninth favourite to win the honour, put at 14-1 by the bookmakers William Hill. More fancied towns were Chelmsford, the favourite at 4-1, Brighton, Ipswich and Milton Keynes.

The status of city gives no special privileges or powers and Sunderland's leading citizen will still be plain "mayor". Only 11 cities have been created this century, the most recent being Canterbury in 1988.

The other contenders for cityhood were Blackburn, Bolton, Colchester, Croydon, Dudley, Guildford, Middlesbrough, Northampton, Preston, Sandwell, Shrewsbury, Southend-on-Sea, Stockport, Telford, Wolverhampton, St David's and Newport in Wales and Armagh in Northern Ireland.

The people of Sunderland welcomed the award. Rose Bell, aged 83, said: "Some people from down south don't like Sunderland. They think we're all daft. I don't know why, it's a wonderful place to live."

MICHAEL POWELL



Floral tribute: Michael Foot and Fay Weldon laying a heart of roses for Salman Rushdie yesterday

is there," the Indian-born author added.

Mr Rushdie said that he had paid a high price for publishing *The Satanic Verses*. "Three years of my life — that's a high price. Three years of my son's life, missing it, that's an even higher price." Others have paid the ultimate price; three people have been murdered, and one was wounded in a knife attack, by Muslim extremists opposed to the book.

Mr Rushdie and Marianne Wiggins, his estranged wife, fled to a secret location in February 1989 after Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the *fatwa*. Guarded by two armed special branch officers at all times, Mr Rushdie has been moved hundreds of times since.

He has made occasional public and broadcast appear-

ances. In December 1990, he announced that he had converted to Islam. He later denounced the dominant trend in Islam and reaffirmed his desire to see his book printed in paperback.

London and Tehran restored diplomatic relations last September but have not exchanged ambassadors. There has been no indication from Tehran that the death sentence could be lifted but President Rafsanjani's government has been trying to play down the *fatwa*. Plans for a 24-hour mass vigil to mark Mr Rushdie's 1,000 days in hiding were abandoned last November at the request of the Foreign Office, which feared that it might delay the release of Terry Waite.

There was no official comment from Tehran yesterday.

but two Iranian newspapers praised the *fatwa* and insisted that Mr Rushdie must die. *Abur*, a radical newspaper, said that Muslims around the world would carry out the death sentence.

In Britain, Kalim Siddiqui, leader of the newly formed British Muslim parliament, said: "Muslims everywhere will continue to regard Rushdie and his supporters as Islam's enemy number one."

Liaqat Hussain, president of the influential Bradford Council for Mosques, said that Mr Rushdie's latest appeal was another attempt to win public sympathy. "The *fatwa* will remain. There is no end to it," he said. "The problem is always foolishly attempting to resolve the issue without recognising the issue. The issue is a British one and

needs to be solved with Muslims in this country, and not Iran."

Francis de Souza, a spokesman for Mr Rushdie, said that he found the disruption to his life and friendships 'hard to deal with'. "He finds it very difficult to cope when the matter is being swept under the carpet," he said. "There is now a huge upsurge of support around the world and we are trying to harness that in a political way."

Mr Rushdie is reported to have earned royalties of around £6 million from sales of *The Satanic Verses*. His protection has cost taxpayers an estimated £3 million. He has contributed some £250,000 towards his accommodation and protection costs.

Salman Rushdie, page 12

## Patten starts libel action over 'dirty tricks' claim

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

CHRIS Patten, the Conservative party chairman, yesterday began legal action against the BBC and Peter Hain, Labour MP, for libel over remarks made by Mr Hain about allegations of a "dirty tricks campaign".

A press release issued by the Conservative party said that Mr Hain made a series of allegations on a BBC *Newsnight* programme last Friday to the effect that Mr Patten had organised or encouraged a concerted campaign of criminal activity "to gain political intelligence to discredit the Labour and Liberal parties".

"These allegations are entirely untrue, and the chairman has instructed lawyers to commence appropriate proceedings for libel against the parties concerned — the BBC and Mr Hain — 'unless suitable retractions, apologies and redress are forthcoming immediately,'" the release said.

A BBC spokesman said that the letter was now in the hands of its lawyers, and no further comment would be made at this stage.

Last night, Mr Hain issued a statement saying he had no comment about the letter from Mr Patten's solicitors. However, he added: "I will not be gagged by Conservative Central Office about these sinister series of apparently politically motivated pre-election smears and computer burglaries."

Mr Hain said that he stood by the terms of his two-par-

liamentary early-day motions calling for explanations, yet to be given, from the prime minister and the chairman of the Conservative party about these events.

The first called on John Major to disclose whether any member of the intelligence service had been authorised to get access to Labour MPs' private offices and to data bases and files on their computers.

The other called on Mr Patten to disclose whether any of his officials had been asked to gain access to Labour members' private offices and to data bases and files on their computers.

William Waldegrave, the health secretary, has challenged Labour over its plans to scrap GP fundholding, claiming that there was now mounting evidence of the scheme's success.

Sitting on the platform at Conservative central office alongside three GP budget holders, Mr Waldegrave said studies had shown that the scheme had produced better services and reduced waiting times. "There is only one threat to the fundholding scheme and to the benefits to patients it is delivering. It comes from the Labour party," he said.

The admission by Robin Cook, Labour's health spokesman, in the Commons that he intended to scrap budget holding had isolated him from GPs, the British Medical Association and patients, Mr Waldegrave said.

## Rushdie starts year four in hiding

Supporters are stepping up the campaign to lift the *fatwa* on Salman Rushdie, writes Peter Victor.

FRIENDS and supporters of Salman Rushdie laid a heart of roses in Smithfield, central London, yesterday to mark the third anniversary of the Muslim death sentence against him. The flowers were laid beneath a plaque commemorating those executed for heresy.

In Strasbourg, 115 Euro-MPs have signed a resolution expressing sympathy for Mr Rushdie and calling on all member states to press Iran to withdraw the *fatwa* declared by Ayatollah Khomeini after the publication of Mr Rushdie's book, *The Satanic Verses*. Human rights organisations world-wide have condemned the *fatwa* and pressed for it to be removed. Among the countries taking part in events to mark the anniversary will be New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Canada, Ireland and Germany.

Mr Rushdie, aged 44, appealed to the British government last Thursday to persuade Iran to lift the death sentence against him. He told the BBC World Service programme *Meridian* that the time was coming when Britain and Iran would sit down to sort out their relations. The government should tell Tehran that the threat was not acceptable and had to be lifted before relations with Britain and Europe could be improved, he said. "It could be done by the snap of a finger, if the will

## Maxwell bed for 'scandal suite'

Strangers to fine art flocked to an auction of the contents of Maxwell's penthouse, Alan Hamilton reports

ROBERT Maxwell's double bed, an object approximately the size of a small airfield, was sold for £1,400 at auction yesterday to a Dorset hotelier who intends to make it the centrepiece of a "scandal suite".

Stanley Gardner, aged 39, a former model and dancer, who described her Canford Cliff establishment as being "for discerning people" aged 35-50, also bought two further enormous beds and a quantity of Maxwell's bedlinen when the contents of the late media tycoon's London penthouse apartment were sold at Sotheby's.

Souvenir hunters, first time buyers and other strangers to the world of fine art crowded the New Bond Street salesroom in the search of curiosities. They were easy to spot as not being the regular Sotheby's clientele; Leslie Weller, the auctioneer, had to tick them off for sitting on valuable antique furniture.

Sold at short notice, and without reserve, by the administrators of the collapsed media empire, many of the best pieces among a largely tasteless assembly of household effects failed to reach their expected prices. Mr Maxwell's 15ft Regency dining table made £20,000 instead of the ex-

pected £25,000 to £30,000. Bargains were there in plenty: a pair of George II giltwood *Grandoles* for only £1,000, and a William IV rosewood side cabinet for £1,300, both well below estimates. There was sluggish interest in the furniture.

Mr Maxwell's 34in television set fetched £1,050, well above estimate, which is more than can be said for the William IV cabinet that once housed it, sold for a disappointing £1,900. Mr Maxwell's toaster fetched £120, his monogrammed bathrobes and towels £1,100, and a further set of towels, stolen from the Ritz Hotel, Paris, judging by their monogram, £100.

His small personal trampoline, apparently unused, with two sets of bathroom scales thrown in, made £120. Four consecutive lots, described in the catalogue as "quantities of books", turned out to be the chairman's copious supply of his own flattering biography by Joe Haines.

Bidding reached a climax at lot 285, a collection of Mr Maxwell's baseball caps. They were bought for £1,100 by his arch rival, *The Sun*. The sale made £472,000, a mere spit into the black hole of the Mirror pension fund.

Photograph, page 1

## Head refuses to take big pay-off

By John O'Leary, Education Correspondent

THE head teacher of a London comprehensive school, which was given a month to act over unsatisfactory standards, yesterday refused to accept an early retirement package said to be worth more than £250,000.

Highbury Grove School, in Islington, north London, once regarded as the showpiece of the comprehensive system, received a damning report from inspectors last month. Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, set a deadline of February 28 for an action plan for improvement to be produced.

Peter Searl, the head teacher, has been backed by Islington education authority to take early retirement. A package, including a £55,000 payment and pension rights of almost £20,000 a year, was said to have been approved by councillors.

Mr Searl said yesterday that he would not resign, and

added that the size of Islington's offer had been exaggerated. "I have not received an offer of £250,000, but if that sort of money is available I hope it would be spent on the school's meagre resources."

Mr Searl, who is 50 and earns £38,000 a year, claimed that the school had been starved of resources. "I have the confidence and support of the governors, staff, parents and students. We have all decided to work together and make the necessary improvements."

The report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate said that urgent action was needed to tackle poor behaviour, high levels of absenteeism, and under-achievement.

Chris Adamson, who chairs Islington education committee, said that he had urged Mr Searl to conform with local government regulations. "We feel that effective management action must be taken to remedy the situation and turn the school around."

## Armed robber kills himself

AN ARMED robber shot and killed himself yesterday after being pursued by unarmed West Midlands police officers following a £6,000 wages raid in Birmingham. Last night police were questioning two other men who were caught after a chase (Stewart Tandler writes).

The man died after two men burst into a metal washers factory in the city centre. Two staff members were attacked and the robbers escaped in a waiting car with the cash. One of them then hijacked a van.

John Barley, managing director of the company owning the van, said: "Suddenly a gunman put his gun through the window and to [the driver's] face and demanded he get out. He was left standing on the pavement."

Unarmed police gave chase in three cars. The gunman eventually abandoned the van and turned on the pursuing police.

Aslam Anwar, working for a packaging company near by, said: "There was a screech of brakes and sirens everywhere. There was a man running and police were chasing him. He turned and threatened them with his revolver or handgun."

Chief Superintendent Derek Williams, of West Midlands police, said that the man was taken to hospital where he was found to be dead. The two other men were captured after they had abandoned their getaway car.

## Price of petrol goes up again

Texaco and Shell yesterday announced another round of petrol price rises, increasing pump prices by 6.4p a gallon (1.4p a litre) from Monday. They blamed sterling's weakness against the dollar and a rise in refinery costs.

Other companies are expected to follow this second petrol price rise this year. The increase means that unleaded petrol will cost 206.4p a gallon (45.4p a litre) and 4-star 222.8p a gallon (49.0p a litre). Texaco said that market volatility was likely to continue to move petrol prices.

## Rape ruling

A three and a half year prison sentence on a man who raped a teenage girl in her flat after she left a party was increased to six years yesterday by the appeal court. Three judges, headed by Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, said that the sentence on Gareth Vaughan-Roberts, aged 27, a Baptist minister's son from Ebbw Vale, Gwent, was "far too lenient". They allowed the Attorney General's challenge.

## Costly seaweed

The price of laverbread, the Welsh seaweed delicacy, could double by March 1. St David's day, because the seas were unusually calm, the seaweed, harvested have been unusually calm. Suppliers of the food, traditionally fried with bacon for breakfast, rely on storms to clear the sand beneath which it grows. This year the seaweed has remained buried and its price is expected to rise from £1.40 to £2.80 a pound.

## Murder arrest

A man has been arrested and charged with the rape and murder of Margery Hopegood, a British tourist, aged 32, in Hamilton, New Zealand. The man, aged 29, was due to appear in court in Hamilton last night. The body of Miss Hopegood, a solicitor from Earls Colne, Essex, was found in public lavatories in the North Island city on January 10.

## Sherry dispute

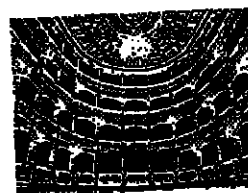
A High Court judge has reserved judgment on an attempt by sherry producers to ban sales of a new drink blending Spanish and British sherries. The sherry producers complain that the labelling and marketing of Stone's Original Pale Cream, produced by Matthew Clark and Sons, of Leeds, is an attempt to confuse consumers. The company is opposing the move.

## In Malta, you can eat out with Queen Victoria.

If your idea of a New Town is all concrete and skyscrapers, then Valletta will come as quite a surprise.

Built over 400 years ago, Valletta was Europe's first ever New Town, designed to be 'the perfect city'.

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The Manoel Theatre, built in 1731

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## Estate agent feared death on her first night in captivity

BY CRAIG SETON

THE kidnapped estate agent Stephanie Slater believed she would die of fright on the first night of her eight days' captivity when she was blindfolded, bound and locked in a wooden box by her abductor, police said yesterday.

Miss Slater, aged 25, told detectives after her release that the box she slept in every night of the ordeal was inside a second container with a lid. At one stage the kidnapper told her that he had another container that could be used "to remove her body", but said he would get rid of it because he no longer needed it.

Detective Inspector Ellie Baker, aged 40, head of the West Midlands police team that debriefed Miss Slater, said yesterday: "Her most crucial time was her first night when she was terrified. She was bound all night and was very, very cold. That night she actually believed she would die in terror."

Further details of Miss Slater's captivity were released yesterday after a ten-day police debriefing session which began when she was released unharmed near her Birmingham home two weeks ago. The kidnapper,

who escaped with a £175,000 ransom, is believed to have abducted and murdered Julie Dart, aged 18, of Leeds, West Yorkshire, last year.

Det Insp Baker said Miss Slater had tried to stay calm and to build a rapport with her kidnapper. She added: "She wants this man caught. She is still very afraid. All the time she thought she was going to die, but she realised if she got a rapport going with this man she would not die. It is her personality that saved her. She is a remarkable woman."

Miss Slater told detectives that a man she was showing around a house for sale in Great Barr, Birmingham, on



Baker: "Stephanie's personality saved her"

January 22 produced a knife in the bathroom which she tried to grab. During a struggle he pushed her into the bath and she pleaded not to be killed, telling the abductor that she was a human being.

He told her she would not be killed or harmed before tying her hands and leading her to a car parked at the rear, where she was blindfolded, gagged and placed under a blanket on the back seat. Tom Cook, assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire, said Miss Slater was extremely frightened but decided she would do exactly as she was told and would not get upset or angry in any way.

After driving for half an hour the kidnapper forced Miss Slater to make a tape-recorded ransom demand to Shipways, her employers. Mr Cook said: "He told her she would not die if she did not cause trouble." After several more hours driving they arrived at the unknown location where she was to be held, blindfolded throughout.

She recollected entering a large building where she was seated on a chair and told to remove her clothing. She was allowed to keep her t-shirt and underwear and was given alternative clothes. The man offered her tea and provided some chips.

Mr Cook said: "He indicated she was going to be put into a form of container where she would sleep. Stephanie says she was placed in what she can only describe as a wooden-type box which she had the impression was inside another container with some sort of lid. Before locking her in the container he remarked on the fact she was calm. Stephanie indicated she was not really calm but frightened to death, but it was not in her nature to scream and shout."

Mr Cook said that Miss Slater spent the night in some pain and feared she would be harmed. She awoke at 8am to the sound of a radio. The kidnapper arrived, removed her from the container and gave her breakfast, after which she was bound and left on a mattress for several hours and then fed at tea-time. In the evening she was returned to the container. The routine was followed each day, when she was allowed out to eat and to do exercises.

On the fifth day Miss Slater was forced to make another tape recording. Only hours before her release, on the day the ransom was to be collected, the abductor returned to the building and said he had got the money. Her clothing was returned and, still blindfolded, she was driven away. Mr Cook said: "During the journey Stephanie indicated she had been afraid the kidnapper would not return and she would not be found. He told her he had a letter in his wallet which had been caught or anything had happened to him, would have indicated where she was."

Miss Slater was driven to within a few hundred yards of her home in Great Barr, Birmingham. Since her return she has been debriefed for three or four hours a day for ten days by four women police officers, with a psychiatrist and medical consultant standing by.



Larger than life: an inflatable that accompanied the Rolling Stones on their worldwide Steel Wheels tour sits outside the National Museum of Film and Photography in Bradford, where a film of the tour is now showing

## Farmer blamed recession for killings

A WATERCRESS farmer, whose family business was in financial trouble, could not face making his workers redundant at Christmas.

So he shot his sleeping wife and then himself after leaving a message telling the prime minister to open his eyes about the recession, an inquest was told yesterday. The deaths so affected the coroner that he adjourned the inquest while he recovered his composure.

The farmer, Robert Biggs, met accountants and a solicitor who advised him to stop trading, and then phoned his brother-in-law, saying that he was going to kill himself.

When Brian Graham arrived at the family home in Whitchurch, Hampshire, he found Mr Biggs, aged 52, and his wife Christine, aged 53, dead in an upstairs bedroom.

Roy Newman, a family friend, who also arrived at the scene on December 14 last year, found a note saying: "Yet another farmer. There is no recession Mr Major - or is there? Open your eyes."

The Biggs' daughter, Laura, aged 27, told the inquest that last year her father's business had started to decline. He feared he would have to make employees redundant and, with Christmas approaching, this preyed on his mind. He felt he would be letting many people down, she said.

Andrew Bradley, the North Hampshire coroner, recorded a verdict of unlawful killing on Mrs Biggs and one of suicide on her husband. He said: "I have been deeply affected by the evidence we have heard this afternoon."

## Identity warning on birth certificate

BY JAMIE DETTMER

NEW British birth certificates and copies of old ones obtained from the Central Register of Births and Deaths at St Catherine's House in London will soon include a printed warning stating that they do not constitute a guaranteed proof of identity.

The move is the first in a planned series of changes to rules governing the birth certificates aimed at stopping tens of thousands of illegal immigrants and fraudsters from securing false identities.

The government hopes that it will alert ministers, banks and other businesses to the dangers of accepting a birth certificate copy as the necessary proof to establish identity. Gill Colmer, a spokeswoman at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, said: "It has always been the case that a birth certificate is not absolute proof of identity. But in the light of recent developments, and the fact that people are using certificates for fraudulent purposes, we wanted to erect a higher barrier."

In February 1990, MPs demanded action after *The Times* revealed the findings of two Immigration Service enquiries which unearthed widespread abuse. They discovered evidence which suggested that tens of thousands of illegal immigrants from Africa and the Indian sub-continent had obtained copies of British birth certificates and had established new identities.

A fraudster wanting a copy of a dead person's certificate needs only to look through the registers at St Catherine's House and find the name of a dead person of roughly the same age. The cost of a duplicate is £5.50 and can be obtained within 48 hours.

The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys wants to introduce a two-tier system of application for certificate copies. This would allow unrestricted application for copies which could not be used as legal documents and thus not obstruct the work of archivists and genealogists. To obtain an authentic copy, under the proposal, an applicant would have to provide further information.

## Holbein auction may be halted

The sale of a £15m masterpiece may have to be postponed because of a legal technicality, Sarah Jane Checkland writes

THE Marquess of Cholmondeley may have to withdraw his £15 million Holbein painting from auction because he has failed to give the government required notice prior to the Christie's sale through its eagerness to revive the stagnant art market by offering a leading work.

A *Lady with a Squirrel* and a *Starling* was unveiled by the auction house on Wednesday as the star lot in its April 15 sale. There were walls of dismay from Neil MacGregor, the National Gallery's director, whose purchase grant of £2.7 million precludes any chance of his buying it.

Yesterday it emerged that the painting is subject to a government scheme exempting it from inheritance tax for as long as the owner agreed not to sell. The Capital Tax Office amended the rules in 1982, obliging owners who plan to sell exempted works to give the Museums and Galleries Commission three months' notice, to give museums a chance to raise the funds. It seems almost certain that the painting was exempted after 1982 and is therefore subject to the new stipulation. Lord Cholmondeley could ignore the rule and carry on with the sale. He has said that his reason for rushing is due to "legal and family reasons". He was not available for comment yesterday but has stated

that the reason for the sale is to set up a maintenance fund for his estate at Houghton, Norfolk.

If he does proceed with the sale, he would do so at the peril of slashing the painting's potential value.

In the past year, Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, has placed long-term export bans on a number of heritage items, including Canova's statue *The Three Graces*. Such action limits a work's potential market value and the fate of the Canova remains in the balance as the Barclay brothers, the businessmen who recently bought *The European*, continue to haggle with the sculpture's owners over the price. By carrying on with the sale, Lord Cholmondeley virtually guarantees that Tim Renton, the arts minister, will recommend a similar course.

One likely buyer for the Holbein is the Getty Museum in California. But it had wanted to buy *The Three Graces* and was angry at the outcome of its application. This time it may not bid.

Peter Longman, director of the Museums and Galleries Commission, said: "It seems likely that the painting was conditionally exempted after 1982, but the National Gallery only heard of the intended sale last Friday. If sellers are not prepared to give the museums and galleries a chance to buy, it is no wonder Tim Renton is thinking about lists." He was referring to a proposal being considered by the arts minister for the government to draw up a list of heritage items, which would be banned from export.

## Libel case editor accuses Parkinson

THE former editor of the magazine at the heart of the Sara Keays libel case said yesterday that she could not think of anything more ludicrous than to describe Miss Keays as a bimbo.

"The thought would not have even flickered across my mind," Frankie McGowan told Mr Justice Drake and the jury on the tenth day of the High Court trial. Miss McGowan was editor of *New Woman* magazine in October 1989 when it published an article headed "Laughing all the way to the bank," which included a reference to Miss Keays's book about her affair with the former Tory party chairman Cecil Parkinson.

Asked by John Preville, QC, for Miss Keays, whether she could understand her complaint about the article, Miss McGowan replied: "No, I can't. I think I refer to Miss Keays in the fairest possible terms."

Mr Preville asked whether the reference in the article to the Profumo sex scandal would suggest to the reader that Miss Keays's book was about a sex scandal. Miss McGowan said: "The way Mr Parkinson treated Miss Keays was scandalous." She said the suggestion that Miss Keays was bracketed together in the article with Fiona Wright, Pamela Bordes and Vicki Hodge could not be further from the truth. The article made clear that Miss Keays was not in the same company as them.

She believed that Miss Keays had intended the newspaper serialisation of her

book, *A Question of Judgment*, to coincide with the 1985 Tory conference, and had chosen the *Daily Mirror* because it was more likely to be sympathetic to her point of view. "I felt Miss Keays had been treated extremely badly and I would not have done anything at all to suggest her reasons for writing the book were anything other than justified. I was actively on her side," she said.

Miss Keays, aged 44, of

Marksbury, near Bath, Avon, claims that the magazine accused her of being a kiss-and-tell money-grabbing bimbo who wrote her book to make money and cause Mr Parkinson maximum embarrassment. Miss Keays denies her book was written or timed to cause embarrassment to Mr Parkinson. She says she wrote it to defend her reputation against a "smear" campaign being waged against her.

Miss McGowan said that

she believed Mr Parkinson would have been totally embarrassed by some of the revelations in the book.

Miss McGowan said: "I genuinely felt regret that Miss Keays saw something in the article which I could not see. I had done nothing to offend her or hurt her." Asked if she would retract any of the article, she replied: "Not a line - a dot or a sentence."

The hearing continues on Monday.

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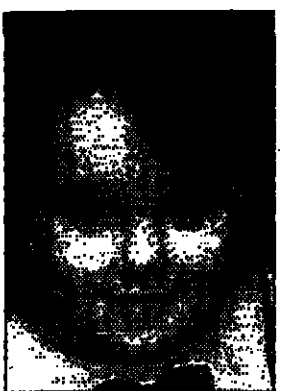
## Two brains are better than one, say Mensa mutineers

BY JOE JOSEPH

YOU would have thought that members of Mensa would be smart enough to settle their tiffs with a spirited exchange of views, without all this buffing and puffing, but the people who think of themselves as Britain's brainiest have split into rival ranks over how to evaluate the country's brightest children.

Most of Mensa's ruling committee have mutinied against Victor Serebriakoff, the president of Mensa and chairman of the Mensa Foundation for Gifted Children. They have broken away to form a rival organisation, the Society for Children of High Intelligence.

Mensa and the foundation carry out one test to isolate the top 2 per cent of the population. The new organisation, which will run summer schools and hopes to open a boarding school for gifted children in Suffolk, is broadening testing to identify the top 5 per cent of children in terms of intelligence and educational ability. The



Baines: the youngest Mensa girl, aged three

breakaways object to Mr Serebriakoff's IQ figures on children as young as three and recruiting them into Mensa. A fortnight ago there was a song and dance in the press over Kathryn Barnes, who became the youngest girl in Mensa, at three. The case reopened the debate over whether parents test their children's IQ to help their children or to give themselves something to crow about.

John Walker, a retired

company director who worked closely with Mr Serebriakoff for many years and was deputy chairman of the foundation, has quit to become chairman of CHII and has taken many Mensa committee members with him. He said yesterday: "I wanted Victor to broaden the testing that we use to identify bright children, but he would not agree to any changes being made."

Edward Dye, a retired teacher who advised the Mensa Foundation, is among the defectors. "To assign any sort of IQ figure to children below five is unreliable and can do considerable harm to them. In attempting to identify the gifted child we must proceed on a much broader base than mere IQ."

Mr Serebriakoff, who took over Mensa shortly after it was founded after the second world war, said: "Our methods have been accepted worldwide. I am sorry that Mr Walker has decided to leave. The problem is that he wanted to be the gaffer." So, not that different from the rest of us, after all.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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For complete TV and radio listings for the next seven days, plus a critical view of the programmes and films, look no further than *The Sunday Times*. The full-colour Television and Radio section is a 24-page comprehensive guide to the week ahead, featuring interviews, news and gossip.

### World Cup cricket

Tomorrow, *The Sunday Times* Television and Radio section includes a 12-page Cricket World Cup supplement, with profiles of the key players, analysis of the teams and full details of television and radio coverage of the tournament.

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## Spens left in limbo after Guinness trial ends

BY PAUL WILKINSON

THE second Guinness trial was formally halted yesterday without a verdict. Roger Seelig, the former merchant banker whose mental health was diagnosed as too fragile to continue in the trial, had the case against him shelved by the legal device of a *nolle prosequi*, an order from the Attorney General effectively preventing further prosecution of the charges against him.

The Serious Fraud Office also announced at Southwark crown court that it would not proceed with the case against the other defendant, Lord Spens, aged 49, the former managing director of the merchant bank Henry Ansbacher. However, no similar *nolle prosequi* order was being sought and the charges will lie on the file.

This prompted his counsel, David Hood, to seek a direction from the trial judge, Mr Justice Henry, under section 17 of the 1987 Criminal Justice Act for a formal acquittal. He claimed that the prosecution's decision entitled Lord Spens to an acquittal as if found not guilty by a jury. It would have a bearing on who paid Lord Spens's costs, which until he was granted legal aid in December 1990 had amounted to more than £400,000. The court was finally adjourned until next Friday.

Outside court Lord Spens said: "If ever there was an example of a case where the law is an ass, this is it. The collapse of the trial was nothing to do with me. Mr Seelig has been discharged but I am in limbo about whether I have been acquitted or not or whether I get costs or not."

The case against the two men effectively collapsed last Tuesday when the judge discharged the jury after saying that psychiatric evidence in-

dicated that Mr Seelig, aged 47, could not cope with the strain of continuing to conduct his own defence.

Mr Seelig had denied charges of conspiracy, fraud and false accounting arising from his alleged part in Guinness's takeover battle for Distillers in 1986. Lord Spens denied conspiracy and false accounting.

Elisabeth Gloster, QC, announcing the SFO's decision, said that the effect of the *nolle prosequi* would be to stay all proceedings against Mr Seelig. Lord Spens, however, was in a different position. Although he had had open heart surgery last summer "it is right to say that he has never sought to use his health as a reason for adjourning or delaying these proceedings", she said.

"In those circumstances the director [of the SFO]... has had to consider whether, even though she remains satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to proceed against Lord Spens, the public interest requires him to be subjected to the rigours of a second lengthy trial. In her decision the public interest does not require such a course to be taken."

Having regard to the relatively minor part he played in the Guinness affair, "it could be regarded as unfair to him to proceed to a second trial". The Bar Council last night joined the call for urgent reform of the legal system dealing with white-collar crime. Gareth Williams, QC, chairman of the council, announced that it was to set up a working party to investigate improvements. But he rejected suggestions that lay juries should be abandoned.

He said it was unacceptable for members of the public to be expected to sit on a jury for months or even years.

## Act starts a storm in the port

BY JOHN YOUNG

MILLIONS of bottles of vintage wine, quietly maturing in cellars, are at risk from the latest intervention of the Nanny state. All those cobwebs and dust are a health risk, it seems; regardless of the likely damage to the wine, the bottles must be brushed, polished and presented for environmental health officer's inspection, and woe betide any defaulters.

That appears to be the implication of a move by health officers in Bristol, which has long associations with the wine trade. Local merchants have been told that, under the Food Safety Act 1990, wine is a food product and subject to the same strict hygiene regulations that apply to groceries on the shelves of shops.

David Jenkins, chairman of the Wine and Spirit Association, yesterday described the move as "pure lunacy. Handling port and madeira can disturb the maturing process and adversely affect vintage", he said.

Juliet Hawkes, of Harveys of Bristol, said: "It is a piece of bureaucratic nonsense. Dusting a vintage bottle could make it difficult to decant and awful to drink."

Bristol city council said that environmental health officers now had powers to order wine merchants to clean their bottles and cellars, but they had not yet had occasion to use them.



Do not disturb: Robin Scott-Martin with maturing bottles of port

## Railman died from sniffing fire extinguisher gas

A RAILWAY guard died after sniffing gas from a fire extinguisher in the guard's van, an inquest was told yesterday. Gary Clark, aged 19, was a regular drug user who had been sniffing solvents since he was 15, his girl friend said.

Mr Clark, of Basingstoke, Hampshire, was found slumped in the guard's van as the train on which he was working pulled into Basingstoke

station in November last year. A post-mortem examination revealed that he had died from inhaling Halon 1211 gas from the extinguisher.

Virginia Mallard, who was living with him at the time of his death, said that they regularly smoked cannabis and took LSD tablets. She said that Mr Clark had confessed to her a fortnight before his death that he abused solvents. She told the inquest

at Basingstoke: "I asked what kind of products he was using and he just said 'Everything'. He said that he had been doing it for a long time."

Mr Clark was found by Alan Oliver, a leading railman, of South Ham, Basingstoke, who had taken a Red Star parcel to the guard's van. He said: "Gary was wrapped around the radiator and I thought he was sleeping. I tried to shake him and got no

answer. I saw spots of blood on his forehead." He called an ambulance but the crew was unable to revive Mr Clark.

Brian Perkins, a coroner's officer, later searched Mr Clark's home and found a key for opening fire extinguishers. Andrew Bradley, North East Hampshire coroner, recorded a verdict of death due to non-dependent abuse of drugs.

## Labour pair lose MI5 case

BY RICHARD FORD  
HOME CORRESPONDENT

A LABOUR MP and a former aide to Neil Kinnock yesterday failed to win an enquiry into whether MI5 still holds files on them. The two women challenged the failure of the Security Service Tribunal to investigate their complaint that files wrongly classifying them as communist sympathisers in the Seventies remained with MI5.

Mr Justice Kennedy ruled in the High Court that there was no case for a judicial review and that there had been too long a delay in bringing the matter to court.

Harriet Harman, Labour MP for Peckham, and Patricia Hewitt, deputy director of the Institute of Public Policy Research, argued that files opened when they worked for the National Council for Civil Liberties, were held in defiance of a 1990 ruling by the European Commission of Human Rights.

During the European proceedings the government introduced the 1989 Security Service Act and the commission held that there was therefore no need for further action to protect their rights. The women were concerned that files on them were still being kept and complained to the Security Service Tribunal, set up to safeguard privacy.

Ms Hewitt said later that she was "extremely disappointed" with the judge's decision. She added: "We will have to begin a new case under the European Convention of Human Rights in order to get protection."

## Libyans to get public hearing

The two Libyans accused of the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am plane over Lockerbie will appear at a public hearing before the Libyan judge investigating the case, the Libyan news agency Jana said yesterday. The unsourced report did not say where or when the session would be held.

Abdel Basset Ali Al-Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimian are accused by Britain and the United States of involvement in the bombing, which killed 270 people. Libya has denied the charge.

On Thursday, Britain rejected Libya's response to a United Nations security council resolution urging it to co-operate in the investigation. It will consult the security council about further moves to force compliance.

## Forgery charge

Andrew Thomas Bourne, aged 44, a barman, of Willesden, north London, was remanded in custody by Brent magistrates, charged with possessing forged Dutch pounds with a face value of about £57 million.

## Rapist jailed

John Broom, aged 30, of Staple Hill, near Bristol, was given three life sentences by Bristol crown court for a series of sex attacks, including the rape of a girl aged 16.

## Nurse loses

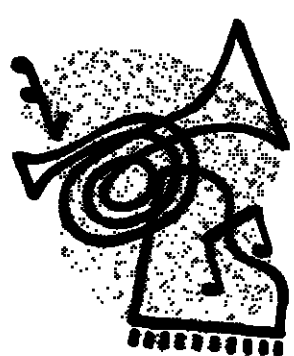
Lisset Burrett, aged 24, a casualty nurse, of Selly Oak, Birmingham, lost a sex discrimination claim against West Birmingham Health Authority after being disciplined for refusing to wear a hat on duty.

## Son accused

Douglas Graham, aged 45, of Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, was remanded in custody by Newcastle magistrates, charged with the murder 13 years ago of his invalid father.

## Safety drive

Edinburgh council is to ban men convicted of sex offences or of domestic violence from becoming taxi drivers, after a series of sex attacks in the city.



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still enjoy the BBC  
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You don't need to be a curator at the V&A to enjoy the Antiques Road Show. Nor do you need to have Mensa membership in order to watch Mastermind.

And the same applies to Britain's premier musical event for talented young people, which once again is sponsored by Lloyds Bank.

The seventeen-programme series starts this evening at 6.50pm on BBC 2. Who knows, by the Grand Final on April 11th you may well end up realising that a cor anglais doesn't have pips in it.



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Human activity is pouring CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate, which is likely to lead to general warming and other changes to the world's climate.

Why should we worry about Global Warming? If it means longer, hotter summers and shorter winters, isn't it to be welcomed?

Unfortunately, not all of the effects are likely to be pleasant. If left unchecked Global Warming could change existing weather patterns across the world.

Rising sea levels will pose a serious threat

to low-lying areas. The speed with which these changes will take place may result in species being unable to cope and dying out altogether.

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Global Warming very seriously. The UK Government is taking a leading role in negotiating the global agreement on climate change due to be signed during the Earth Summit this year.

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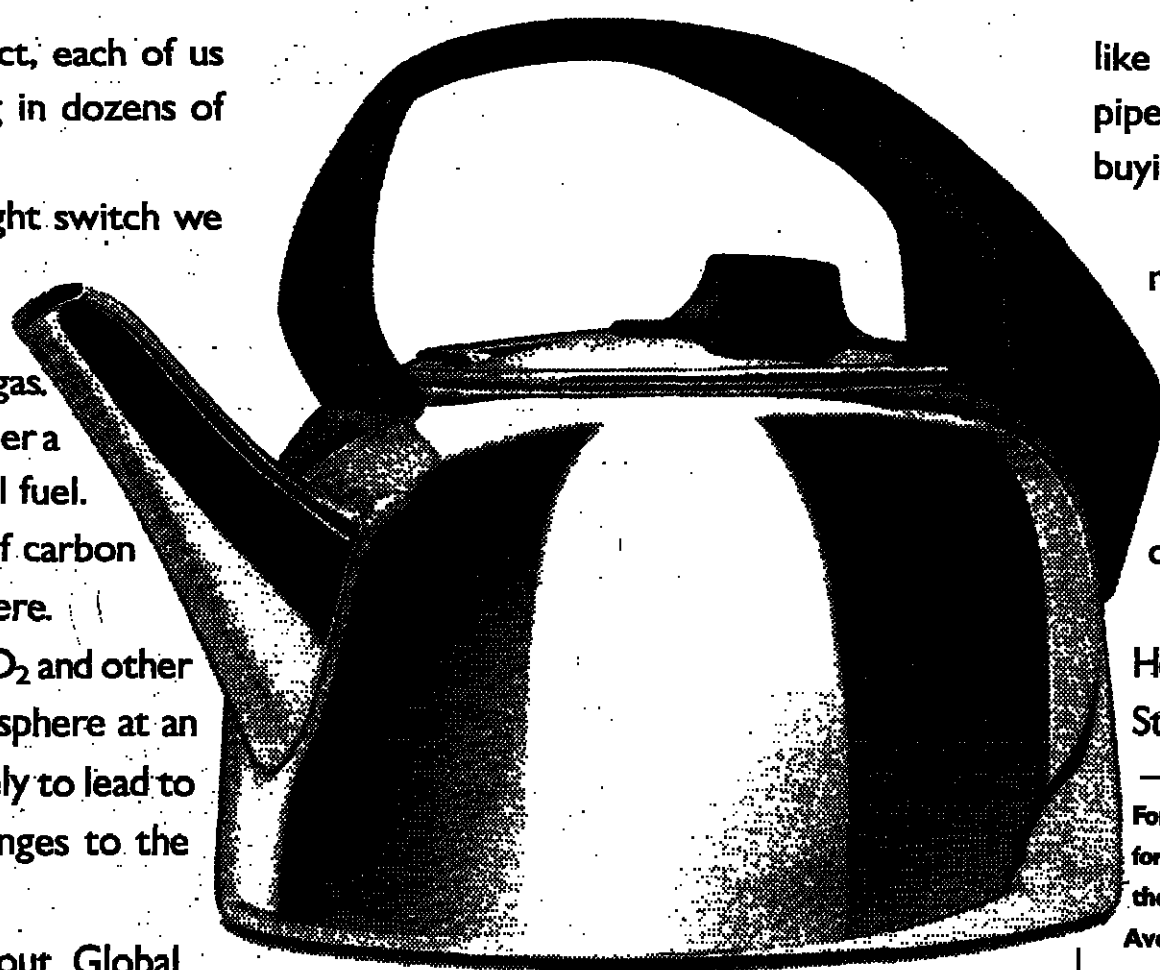
By making relatively straightforward changes in the way we use energy, it's estimated that we could cut domestic fuel bills by 20% or more, with a corresponding drop in the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced.

Obvious practical action includes things like insulating cavity walls, lagging the loft and pipes, draught-proofing doors and windows and buying modern energy-efficient appliances.

But there are also lots of simpler things like not overfilling the kettle - you only heat the water you actually need.

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## Ending of safety net puts ministers at risk

# Poll tax threatens marginals

By DOUGLAS BROOM  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
CORRESPONDENT

THE poll tax is likely to be an important factor in more than two dozen Conservative marginal seats, including four held by government ministers, according to a new analysis of official figures.

The phasing out of safety net grants to councils worst hit by the change from the rates to the community charge will lead to rises of up to £25 a head in the poll tax or cuts of up to £8 million in services. Councils covering Tory marginals will be among the worst hit by the change, according to analysis of government grant figures carried out by the Labour party.

In York, where Conal Gregory has the smallest Conservative majority anywhere at 147 votes, the Labour city council will be forced to increase the poll tax by £25 or make cuts of £2 million. The Labour London borough of Southwark, which includes Gerald Bowden's Dulwich constituency (majority 180) will lose £3.7 mil-

Majority	Local Authority	Grant reduction £m	Effect on poll tax
147	York (Lab)	2.0	25
180	Southwark (Lab)	3.7	25
774	Middlesbrough (Lab)	1.5	15
257	Wandsworth (Con)	5.6	25
1,362	Kirkcaldy (Lab)	7.3	25
1,677	Kirkcaldy (Lab)	7.3	25
2,229	Hyndburn (Lab)	1.5	25
2,407	Lambeth (Lab)	0.4	2
2,563	N Tyneside (Lab)	2.4	16
2,639	Pendle (Lab)	1.6	25
3,772	Lewisham (Lab)	4.2	25
3,927	Barrow & Furness (Lab)	1.5	25
4,495	Ashfield (Lab)	2.1	25
4,814	Lewisham (Lab)	4.2	25
4,982	Rossendale (Lab)	1.2	25
5,806	Bradford (Lab)	8.1	25
5,965	Hillingdon (Con)	3.0	17
6,045	Calderdale (Lab)	3.7	25

Source: DoL and the Labour party

lion in grant, equivalent to £25 a head on the poll tax. At Middlesbrough council, which covers the Stockton South seat of Tim Devlin (majority 774), councillors will have to cope with the loss of £1.5 million by making cuts in services or adding up to £15 to the poll tax.

Ministers affected by the change include David Mellor, chief secretary to the Treasury and MP for Put-

ney, John Maples, financial secretary to the Treasury and MP for Lewisham West, David Trippier, junior environment minister, and MP for Rossendale and Darwen, and Colin Moynihan, junior energy minister and MP for Lewisham East.

Only in Mr Mellor's case will local poll tax payers escape unscathed. Wandsworth council, which will lose £5.6 million in reduced

grant, has already set a zero poll tax.

The other three ministers' constituencies face poll tax rises of up to £25 a head or cuts ranging from £4.7 million in Lewisham to £1.25 million in Rossendale.

David Blunkett, Labour's local government spokesman, said: "These figures reveal another poll tax bombshell about to hit key Tory marginal seats. The government will be held directly responsible for the rises in poll tax and the cuts in services that will result from the loss of grants to these areas."

"I doubt if any of the Tory MPs hit by this have woken up to the fact yet. Perhaps when they do they will put pressure on the Chancellor to fix it in the Budget."

A Tory spokesman said the party was confident that the blame for any rises in poll tax or cuts in services would rest with Labour councils in the areas affected. "It is up to the councils to budget sensibly and to live within their means. This change comes as no surprise, they have known about it for a long time."

## Decimal coinage comes of age

Louise Hildago celebrates a 21st birthday but finds nostalgia for the bob and tanner still has currency

THE decimal coin is 21 years old today. On February 15, 1971, the currency replaced pounds, shillings and pence amid dire warnings of raging inflation and "decimal dilemmas". Traditionalists grumbled about the demise of a system that traced its ancestry to the solidus and denarius introduced by the Roman emperor Diocletian in 298.

The late Ian MacLellan, the Conservative shadow chancellor in 1969, led a spirited crusade against the act, declaring himself an "unrepentant ten-bobber".

Other opponents warned that prices would rise in the first year as shopkeepers rounded them up. The fears were proved largely unfounded: in the year before decimalisation the retail price index rose 8.6 per cent and by only 8 per cent the year after.

The Treasury estimated that the changeover cost between £100 million and £150 million. To make the hundreds of millions of decimal coins needed for D-Day, the Royal Mint moved from its



Countdown: pre-decimal children learn to change

ancient home near the Tower of London to larger premises in Llantrisant, Mid Glamorgan, from where it still issues the country's coinage.

There are still those nostalgic for the language of copper, tanners and bobs. In a letter to *The Times* two months ago, Professor Peter King, bemused the "Napoleonic tyranny of decimalisation". The King's Head public house in Islington, north London, refuses to serve those using the decimal terminology and insists on asking £1 14s for a pint of bitter.

The former florin, whose face value is now 10p, is the only coin still minted at the same size and weight as its pre-decimal form. When it is withdrawn later this year, the hope of coming out of the supermarket with an antique in one's change will finally be extinguished.

Alan Parker's film *The Commitments* has six nominations and the *Silence of the Lambs* nine, including Anthony Hopkins as best actor and Jodie Foster as best actress. Kevin Costner's Oscar-winning *Dances with Wolves* is nominated as best picture and Costner is nominated for the David Lean award for best direction. The ceremony is on March 22.

## Darlings snubbed in British Oscars

THE popular television series *Darling Buds of May* has failed to win any nominations for Britain's "Oscars" — the British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards.

Comedy nominations, announced yesterday, are *The Curse of Mr Bean*, *Drop the Dead Donkey*, *One Foot in the Grave* and *Only Fools and Horses*. *Poirot*, *Inspector Morse*, *Spender* and *Casualty* are nominated for best drama series, and *GBH*, *Coronation Street*, *Clarissa* and *Prime Suspect* for best drama serial.

Best light entertainment nominations go to *Have I Got News for You*, *Julie Walters and Friends*, *Spitting Image* and *Whose Line is it Anyway?*

The *Darling Buds* stars David Jason, Pam Ferris, Catherine Zeta Jones and Philip Frank, who together received the Variety Club TV personality of the year award last week, also failed to receive any nominations.

Alan Bleasdale's controversial series *GBH*, about corruption in a northern council, wins a number of nominations, including best actor for Robert Lindsay and Michael Palin, best actress for Lindsay Duncan, and best theme for Elvis Costello. Patricia Routledge wins a best light entertainment performance nomination for suburban snob Hyacinth Bucket in *Keeping Up Appearances*, while *A Question of Attribution*, about the art historian and spy Anthony Blunt, is in the best single drama category.

Alan Parker's film *The Commitments* has six nominations and the *Silence of the Lambs* nine, including Anthony Hopkins as best actor and Jodie Foster as best actress. Kevin Costner's Oscar-winning *Dances with Wolves* is nominated as best picture and Costner is nominated for the David Lean award for best direction. The ceremony is on March 22.

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For many the visit to Kizhi Island in Lake Onega will be the highlight of the waterway journey. Here the magnificent Church of the Transfiguration with its 22 shimmering grey domes in three tiers are more than a match for the fairytale splendour of Moscow's St Basil's. From here we cruise through the fascinating waterway system to the cities of the Golden Circle, stopping at Yaroslavl and Uglich on the mighty Volga, and later visiting Suzdal and Zgorok. These magical cities of Holy Russia still preserve their medieval krenlins, fortified monasteries and onion-domed churches in surroundings remote from the modern world.

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Government expresses reservations about effect on farmers of private member's bill

# Bill to ban hunting defeated by 12 votes

BY PETER MULLIGAN AND JOHN WINDER

AN ATTEMPT to outlaw fox hunting was defeated by 12 votes in the Commons yesterday. The private member's bill put forward by the Labour MP Kevin McNamara was refused a second reading by 187 votes to 175.

Although MPs had a free vote, Angela Rumbold, the Home Office minister, said that the government had reservations about the bill's effect on farmers. Robin Corbett, Labour's home affairs spokesman, confirmed that it would be Labour policy at the general election to end hunting with hounds.

The vote, at the end of a five-hour debate, was greeted with clapping from the public gallery and cries of "Shame" from the bill's supporters. The main provision of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill was to ban the use of dogs in hunting wild animals. It also sought to make it an offence to set snares.

Mr McNamara, MP for Kingston upon Hull North, said that he wanted to correct an anomaly allowing people to inflict cruelty on wild mammals which, if committed on domestic ones, would be criminal. He described how a gang of youths in Canterbury had shot a hedgehog with an air rifle, played football with it and placed it, still alive, on a bonfire. The case brought against them by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals failed because the hedgehog could not be described as domestic or captive.

He dismissed the idea that hunting with hounds was a form of pest control and described it as a form of entertainment in which foxes were bitten to death once caught. He advocated a switch to drag hunting, where artificial trails are laid.

Nicholas Ridley, Tory MP for Cirencester and Tewkesbury and a former cabinet minister, said that he did not hunt, but defended the right of others to do so. "A certain understanding, patience and tolerance is necessary if this life, this freedom, that we have so cherished in this country for so long, is not to be taken away by those who

would wish to impose their prejudices upon others."

Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield, said: "When the bill is on the statute book, and it will be before the end of the century if not before the general election, people will look back and they will read the speech of Mr Ridley and other speeches made by those who favour hunting. They will not be able to persuade their children that such arguments were put forward by civilised men and women."

Dame Janet Fookes, Tory MP for Plymouth Drake and a senior member of the RSPCA, said: "It is a duty on us to ensure there is no unnecessary cruelty or suffering." She said that the real cruelty of hunting lay not in the animal's death, but in the exhaustion and shock it suffered in the chase. In the scale of cruelty, hunting, snaring and torture were higher than shooting, which she would not seek to ban.

Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat MP for Southwark and Bermondsey, said that the number of foxes caught and killed by hunting was minimal. Most people went hunting for entertainment and exercise.

Michael Jopling, Conservative MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale and a former agriculture minister, said that he was concerned about the vagueness of a bill which one lawyer had said might stop a cat being put into a granary plagued with mice. "I get the impression that some supporters of the bill are motivated as much by revulsion against supporters and followers of the hunt as by any cruelty that may happen."

The bill was described by John Townend, Conservative MP for Bridlington, as part of an orchestrated campaign to victimise a minority. "I cannot help feeling that there is a certain amount of good old-fashioned left-wing class prejudice," he said.

Mrs Rumbold said that the bill would make effective control of agricultural pests difficult. Its proposal to issue licences for the control of pests would mean a massive workload and huge costs. "Normal agricultural prac-

tice would be severely disrupted. The need for a farmer to protect his crops or livestock from pests is crucial and something this bill doesn't quite recognise," she said.

Mr Corbett said that hunting with hounds was "organised ritual destruction of wildlife carried out in fancy dress and amid great ceremony by those who pretend they have care for wildlife and their habitat. It degrades and disgraces the name of legitimate sport."

"No other people would be allowed unfettered to cause such mayhem, distress, nuisance and damage. In urban areas, the police would have charged them with public order offences before they could say 'Tally ho'."

A backbench bill to allow traffic-calming works on roads completed its remaining stages yesterday, as did a bill to allow nurses, midwives and health visitors to issue some medical prescriptions, and a bill to change the definition of still-birth.

Hunting reprieve, page 1



Joining the pack: two of a group of children from Loughborough, Leicestershire, who wore animal costumes outside Parliament yesterday in a demonstration of support for Kevin McNamara's bill

## Early poll puts paid to Baker's asylum bill

BY RICHARD FORD

LEGISLATION to curb abuses of the asylum laws is expected to be dropped because there is not enough parliamentary time left before the general election.

The government's business managers have been discussing how much of its legislative programme can go onto the statute book if John Major decides on a general election on April 9. The asylum bill, which Kenneth Baker last year said had the highest priority, is expected to be the main casualty of preparations for a spring election.

Even a May poll would be unlikely to allow time for the measure to pass all its parliamentary stages. Yesterday Mr Baker conceded that the bill might not become law before a general election.

The bill was intended to change the procedures for dealing with the rapid increase in numbers seeking asylum. It involved the recruitment of extra officials to speed the processing of applications, the creation of a fast track appeals procedure and the compulsory fingerprinting of people seeking asylum.

Leading article, page 13

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Rumbold: worry about controlling pests

Corbett: Labour to end hunting with hounds

### Those voting Yes (Labour unless stated)

Diane Abbott, Irene Adams, Graham Allen, David Amess (C), Donald Anderson, Jack Ashley, David Ainsworth (C), Harry Barnes, Keith Barnes (Ind), Bob Barron, John Batten, Anthony Bevan, Mark (C), Susan Bell, Tony Benn, Andrew Bennett, Joe Bennett, Gerald Bermingham, David Gilroy, Brian (C), Sydney Biddle, Tony Blair, Paul Boateng, Andrew Bowden (C), Roland Bryant, Keith Brierley, Sir Bernard Braine (C), Jeremy Brow, Graham (C), Thomas (C), Robert Clay, Harry Cohen, Robin Corbett, Jeremy Corbyn, Councillor Thomas Cox, Stanley Crouch, Robert Croy, Gardiner, Christopher, Sir John Gifford, Sir Alan Glynn, Sir Philip Goodhart, Alan Goodlad, Charles Goodson-Wicks, Sir Anthony Grant, John Greenwood, Patrick Ground, Sir Michael Gyles, John Gummer, William Hague, Archie Hamilton, Neil Hamilton, David Harris, Alan Haseldine, Michael Heseltine, Robert Hicks, Douglas Hogg, Sir Peter Hornsby, Michael Howard, Gerald Howarth, David Hunt, Sir Ralph Howell, David Hunt, Andrew Hyslop, Robert Jackson, Timothy Jarmann, Peter Jax, Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, Michael Jopling, Robert Kay, Tom King, Timothy Kirkhope, Roger Langan, Norman Lamont, Ian Lang, Michael Latham, Nigel Lawson, John Leech, Edward Leigh, Mark Lennox-Boyd, Peter Lilley, Sir Ian Lloyd, Michael Lous, Sir Richard Luce, Sir Nicholas Lyell, David Maclean, Patrick McLoughlin, Sir Michael McShane-Wilson, David Maud, Humphrey Maitland, Sir Markham, Michael Mann, Francis Maude, Sir Robin Maxwell-Footer, Sir Patrick Mayhew, Sir Hal Miller, Iain Miles, Roger Monte, Sir Hector Monro, Sir Peter Morrison, Malcolm Murrell, Sir Gerard Neale, Richard Needham, Anthony Nelson, Sir Michael Neuber, Tony Newton, Patrick Nicholson, David Nicholson, Caryl Osmond, Richard Page, James Pate, Cecil Parkinson, James Pauson, Barry Porter, William Powell, Sir David Price, Sir Timothy Raison, Tim Rendon, Sir Robert Rhodes James, Graham Riddick, Nicholas Ridley, Sir Julian Rodda, Malcolm Rifkind, William Ross (C), Peter Rost, Andrew Rowe, Richard Ryder, Sir Michael Shaw, Colin Shephard, Richard Shepherd, Michael Shenton, Roger Sims, Sir Trevor Slinn, Timothy Smith, Nicholas Soames, Keith Speed, Tony Speller, Sir James Spiller, Michael Spicer, Anthony Suerd, Allan Stewart, Sir Ian Stewart, Sir John Stokes, Hugo Sumner, Ian Taylor, Norman Tebbit, Sir Donald Thompson, John Townend, Caryl Townsend, Richard Trimble, David Trimble, David Trimble, Gerard Vaughan, Peter Viggers, John Wakeham, William Wakeham, George Waldegrave, William Walker, Peter Walker, Sir Dennis Walters, Charles Wardle, John Watc, Robert Wells, Raymond Whitting, Jerry Wiggin, John Wilkinson, Ann Winterton, Nicholas Winter, Mark Wollaton, Timothy Yeo.

Tellers for the yes were William Berron and Sir Charles Morrison.

Those voting No (Conservative unless stated)

Jonathan Aitken, Richard Alexander, Michael Allison, Rupert Allison, Julian



# EC and Efta settle legal powers split to salvage trade deal

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

NEGOTIATORS last night stitched back together the agreement to create a frontier-free single market of 19 European states which faltered last December in the face of objections by the European Court. Officials of the EC and Efta (the European Free Trade Association) announced that they had overcome the difficulties raised by the judges.

One official said last night that talks had come to a successful end, but the amended draft treaty faces several hurdles before it can come into force at the beginning of next year. Late on Thursday, the European parliament voted to ask the European Commission to send the treaty back to the court for an opinion and threatened to block ratification if the request was ignored. The full Commission and council of foreign ministers will need to endorse the compromise.

Besides the European par-

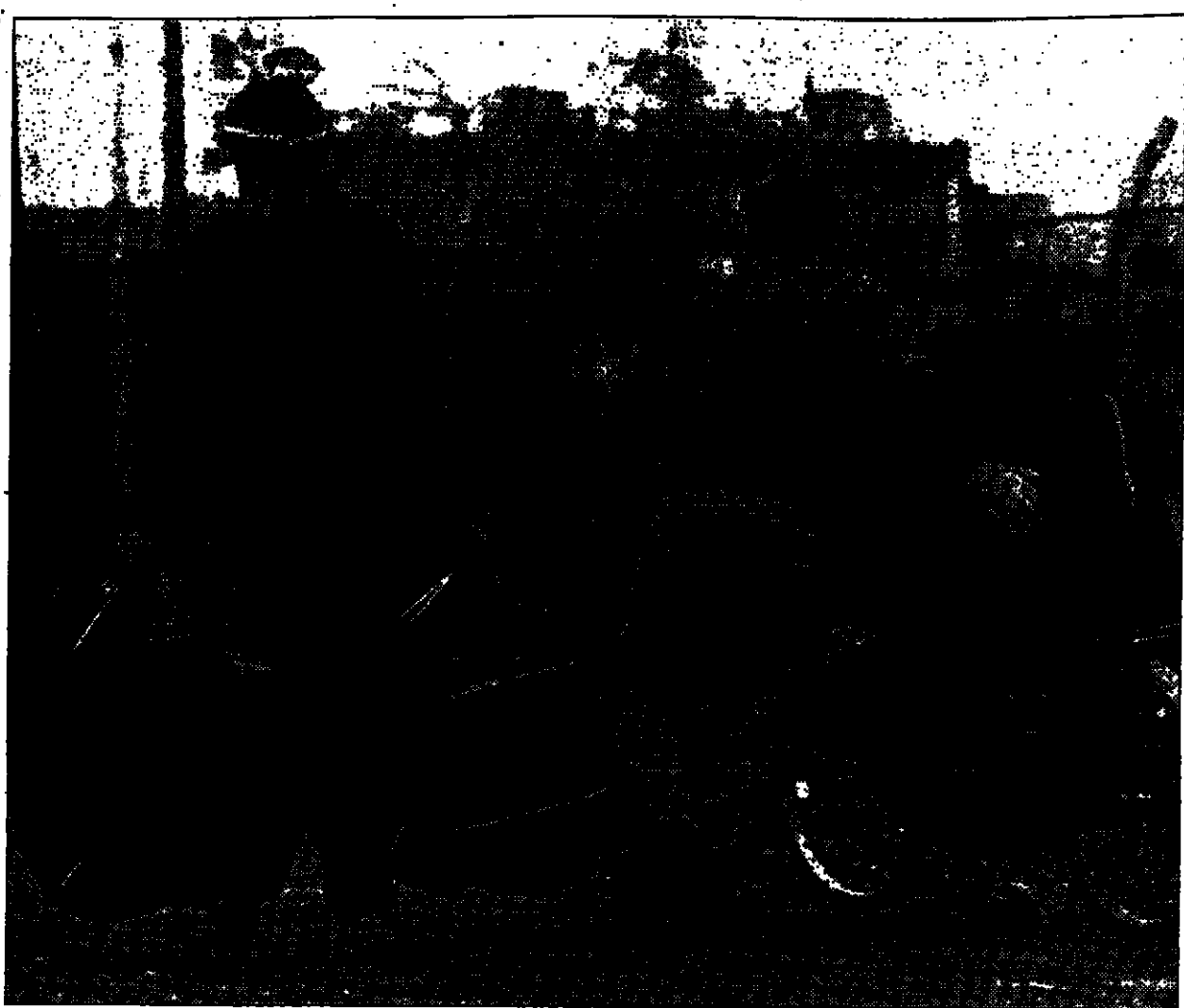
liament, the 19 national governments need to ratify the treaty. The Swiss government's stance on the latest compromise was not known last night, but the Swiss have been, throughout the talks, the most reluctant of the Efta states to make concessions to EC demands. Last night's deal leaves the legal system for the planned single market largely in EC hands.

The treaty aims to create a "European economic area" of the 12 EC and seven Efta countries (Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) by removing all trade barriers. If the agreement is ratified, Efta's 37 million citizens would join the EC single market in 1993 but stay outside the Community's political machinery. Most Efta governments see the arrangement as an interim one and want full EC membership in the mid-1990s.

Both Efta and European

Commission negotiators would prefer the amended treaty not to be sent back to the EC court for a formal opinion, since they are not legally obliged to ask the judges' opinion again. Informal contacts between the Commission and the court are likely to continue, but such soundings did not prevent the court from stopping the treaty in its tracks last Christmas.

Yesterday's breakthrough is understood to have turned on a formula which balances the powers of the legal systems in the EC and Efta. Under the broad agreement, the European Court would continue to police all trade rules which it presently supervises and all commercial disputes covering the entire new zone. An Efta court would adjudicate cases concerning Efta states alone. A three-man arbitration committee would oversee the settling of borderline disputes.



Wheels of fortune: Russian merchant seamen, on shore leave in Rotterdam, returning to their ship loaded up with old car tyres which they can sell back home for large profits. Such sights are becoming common

## Gibraltar seeks end to colony status

By DOMINIQUE SEARLE IN GIBRALTAR AND MICHAEL BINYON

SIX days before arriving in London for talks with the government and opposition, Joe Bossano, the chief minister of Gibraltar, told the opening session of the colony's parliament that it wants to change its constitution and shed its colonial status.

He proposed transferring responsibility for Gibraltar's defence and foreign affairs to the European Community, leaving Britain to retain formal sovereignty over the Rock which otherwise would be largely self-governing.

His comments, which are certain to stir controversy in Madrid, appeared in London last night to be an attempt to get around the provision in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, under which the Rock was ceded in perpetuity to Britain on the basis that Spain would have the first option to have it back if Britain left.

Mr Bossano said Gibraltar was seeking reform of its 1969 constitution with the aim of decolonising within the next four years. He stopped short of calling for independence, but told the House of Assembly to applaud: "The time has come for Gibraltar to be seen as a territory whose people are fully entitled to the right of self-determination. We reject entirely the argument that an 18th-century treaty can limit or inhibit the right of European people to exercise self-determination when that right is not denied to another single human being."

Britain reacted coolly to his remarks. The Foreign Office notice that Gibraltar's status in the European Community is determined by Article 2274 in the Treaty of Rome covering "territories for whose external affairs member states are responsible". It said independence was not an option unless Spain was willing to agree. During talks with Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, on Thursday, Britain will be "ready to listen but there was no question of formal constitutional talks".

Mr Bossano said the Gibraltar parliament should "play the historic role of ushering in the end of the colonial era in our history". He has never made clear how Brussels, which has no department responsible for the foreign affairs or defence of member states, could take on responsibility for Gibraltar.

Since 1985, Spain has been able to raise the issue of its sovereignty claim at annual talks between foreign ministers held under the so-called "Brussels process". Madrid argues that decolonisation should involve the reintegration of Gibraltar into Spain.

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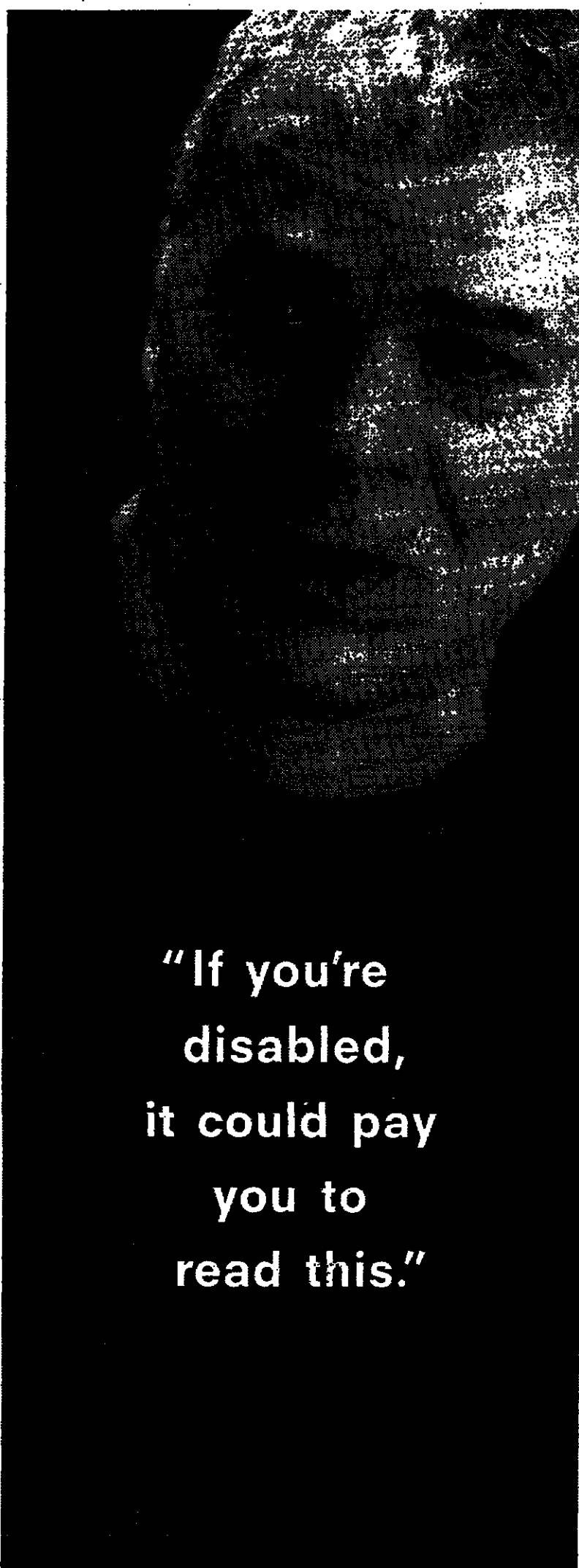
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"If you're disabled, it could pay you to read this."

## Honecker can go to hospital

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

THE German government has agreed to allow Erich Honecker to be moved to a hospital in Moscow to be treated for possible liver cancer and depression, provided an independent medical examination confirms that he needs the treatment.

The foreign ministry in Bonn confirmed yesterday that while any treatment was under way no moves would be made to arrest the former East German leader and extradite him to Germany, where he is wanted on manslaughter charges.

Herr Honecker has been living in the sanctuary of the Chilean ambassador's residence in Moscow since December. Yesterday the Chilean and Russian ambassadors in Bonn were told that, although any necessary treatment could go ahead at the hospital, Germany was still insisting that Herr Honecker should be extradited.

The German ambassador in Moscow has asked the government there to ensure that the report of Herr Honecker's ill health is not used as a way of trying to smuggle him out of the country. To guard against that, Germany wants a fresh check made on the findings of the three Russian doctors who have examined him.

## Taxmen stalk East's new millionaires

BY ROGER BOYES, EAST EUROPE CORRESPONDENT

MILLIONAIRES of the East, until you have nothing to lose but your Mercedes coupes, your Jacuzzis and private jets. The Eastern European market revolution may have been slow taking off, but a few hundred entrepreneurs have managed, by hook or by crook, to accumulate fortunes in the past two years. Now the taxman, another Western innovation, is knocking at the door.

As a result, some millionaires have disappeared abroad, while others are taking an intense interest in tax write-off charities. Luxembourg and Liechtenstein have suddenly become attractive destinations for short winter holidays. Top businessmen's clubs have been opened in all of the East European capitals, ostensibly to discuss investment opportunities and "networks", but in fact to work out tax dodges.

The problem seems most acute in Russia, where the government is desperate to soak up hard currency. Parliament has drafted changes to article 153 of the old penal code which allowed for stiff jail sentences on profiteers. But it seems that President Yeltsin is not going to allow businessmen to slip by unscathed. One decree being prepared proposes taxes of up to 90 per cent on private companies whose income exceeds a feeble £200 at today's rates a month.

That will hit men such as Herman Sterligov, aged 25, a Muscovite who made his first \$1 million in January

last year. He took out a loan for two million roubles, rented office space and organised an agency dealing in building materials. Thousands of Muscovites turned up to buy and sell. Mr Sterligov charged 10 per cent on every deal and the profits were ploughed back into the agency. Now, his company has a network of such agencies that trade in everything except food. He and his brothers now charge for brokers' office space on his exchange - a Western broker typically has to pay him £200,000 for the right to trade - and a fee of 0.5 per cent on every deal transacted. His wife and child live mainly in New York. They have a big flat in London and a more modest place in Moscow.

The nervousness of East European millionaires is not just about taxes as such, but also about the possibility of an egalitarian backlash that could push the tax collector, and the public prosecutor, into action.

There is still a great deal of mystery, not only about the source of some fortunes - a typical biography sees the lucky man disappearing in America or elsewhere in the West for two years in the 1980s and returning with a big pile of start-up capital - but also the way they are being controlled. The richest entrepreneur in Bulgaria is probably Valentin Movov, aged 40, who owns several companies and Western dealerships. The tax authorities spent two months going through his books, but little has been heard since.

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## Uzbeks greet girlie mags and meatballs

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN TASHKENT

AMERICAN officials on Tashkent airfield, supervising the unloading of a mixed cargo which included antibiotics and institution-size, oven-ready cartons of spaghetti and meatballs, acknowledged that they were providing no more than a gesture of goodwill to the people of the new state of Uzbekistan.

Local journalists, assembled to meet the airlift, also said that there was no food disaster in Tashkent, but took the point that the gift was further recognition of their independence and were impressed that the aircraft had arrived directly not from Moscow but from Ankara.

Most of the meals, left-over rations from Desert Shield with their shelf lives running out, are intended for orphanages, hospitals and old people's homes, according to Lieutenant-Commander James Leahy. His team's normal job is to carry out on-site inspection of nuclear weapons, but now, thanks to a knowledge of Russian, they are in Uzbekistan to ensure that Operation Provide Hope does not become an operation to supply the black market.

An American naval attaché was also on hand at the airport to claim delivery of a suitcase full of dollar bills designed to ease the way of a separate State Department delegation wandering through the newly independent states to look out for sites for new embassies.

There were other signs that free trade was catching on quickly. A Moscow-born KGB border guard, standing watch at the entrance hatch of the American C141 military cargo aircraft, was one of

the few officials not to barter away his hat as the aircraft traded girlie mags, Marlboros and the odd bottle of Jack Daniels for souvenirs of their day trip to Central Asia.

Their flight left Turkey in the small hours and turned round immediately to avoid the problems of staying the night. The Turks, in addition to providing this support, have consented temporarily to open their border with Armenia where the needs are said to be desperate.

But whereas Western Europe sends low-cholesterol butter to Armenia, the Turks — possibly in closer cultural understanding of deprivation — included in their pallet-load to their Turkic brethren in Uzbekistan not simply margarine but also some 800lb of cigarettes, all donated through the Red Crescent.

"The people here are proud; they would never ask for help," said Dilnoza Kavinova, who has been co-opted to help to pinpoint aid recipient families in the areas outside Tashkent where families' ability to weather 400 per cent inflation is that much less. Unlike the European Community relief effort, with the much more ambitious aim of deflating food prices, the American airlift is a grand — and in transport costs expensive — gesture.

Allison Brown, a specialist in rural development recently arrived in Tashkent, said the money was simply not available to mount the equivalent of Marshall Aid to mark the ending of the Cold War, but that a normal aid programme might be possible if the need proved to be there.

Leading article, page 13

## Costs threaten press freedom in Russia

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

AS MOSCOW'S journalists gathered last night for a grand charity ball, the festive mood was marred by the prospect of mass unemployment. Virtually all the best-known titles of the former Soviet press say they are days away from financial collapse.

Sky-rocketing costs have created a climate of wild uncertainty in a country where everything about newspapers used to be predictable, from their ideological content and dreary appearance to their negligible price. According to Pavel Gusev, president of the journalists' union in Moscow, only President Yeltsin can stop the presses of Russia's main publications from coming to a stop soon.

*Pravda*, one of the very few newspapers to publish on Mondays, said this week that it would, in the interests of economy, no longer come out on Thursdays. The problem for dailies like *Pravda*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* is that 90 per cent of the copies they sell are delivered to subscribers who pay annually in advance.

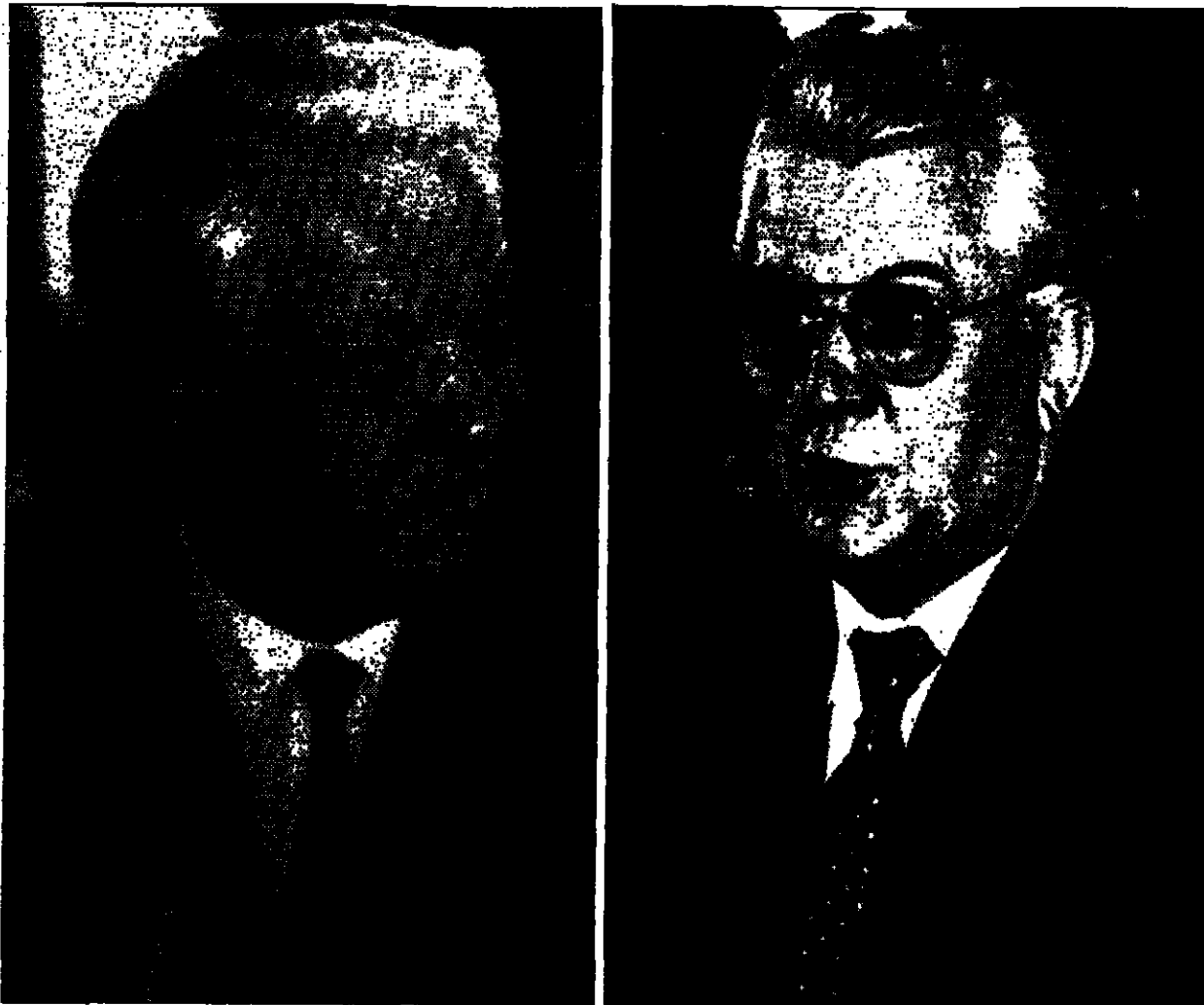
When subscription prices for 1992 were calculated last autumn, it was assumed that newsprint would cost up to 4,000 roubles (about £20 at the current market rate) a ton. This seemed a generous assumption, as the price was 800 roubles a ton a year ago. But newsprint is already sell-

ing on Moscow's new commodity exchanges for 20,000 roubles a ton, while the government struggles to keep it below 12,000 roubles within what remains of the state distribution system.

As the price of almost everything, including labour, spirals upwards, the newspapers worst hit are those whose readership tops ten million, notably the trade union newspaper *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the popular youth daily. "The more readers you have, the worse your situation," Mr Gusev said.

In the spot that used to indicate a cover price of a few kopeks (a fraction of a penny) many newspapers now say "retail price negotiable". Hundreds of people queue at printing presses every morning for piles of papers to hawk for whatever they can get. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* said this week that Russia and its fellow republics were on the brink of an "information catastrophe" that could ruin the chances of reform and even the existence of the new commonwealth. Everyone's worst fear is that something akin to the bad old Communist monopoly over printing presses and distribution will be re-established and subsidies confined to papers that adhere loyally to the government line.

Tabloid bid, page 10



Military manoeuvres: President Yeltsin of Russia, left, and President Kravchuk of Ukraine, who clashed at yesterday's Minsk meeting on the future of the former Soviet Union's armed forces. Hopes fade, page 1

## Croats killed in truce violations

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

CROAT and Yugoslav military delegations were scheduled to meet yesterday to discuss several serious ceasefire breaches in which at least three Croats were reported to have died. Police in Osijek, the eastern Croatian regional capital, said two people died when a shell hit their car on Thursday and the Croatian news agency reported an artillery attack near the Adriatic port of Zadar.

The ceasefire violations came as Croat and Serb politicians welcomed the decision by Boutros Boutros Ghali, the United Nations secretary-general, to recommend the dispatch of a peacekeeping force of more than 10,000 to Yugoslavia. "The time is right," said Borisav Jovic, the Serb representative on the old Yugoslav federal presidency. Mate Granic, the Croatian prime minister, said that he welcomed the UN troops so long as they were just "temporary". The deployment of the force has been vigorously opposed by the leaders of Krajina, the main Serbian enclave in Croatia.

Continuing ceasefire violations take several lives every

week and underline the fragility of the truce. While Belgrade has unreservedly welcomed the secretary-general's recommendation, the Serbian press and government officials repeatedly give warnings that Croatia is arming fast. "Obviously they are preparing for war," said Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia.

Mr Simic said he hoped that after a peacekeeping force had arrived Cyrus Vance, the UN special envoy, would preside over the new peace talks. Lord Carrington's mediation had failed, he said, adding that Serbia's "greatest mistake" had been to believe that the European Community would respect international law.

He confirmed that Belgrade still hoped to construct a new Yugoslavia comprising Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, he said that unless Bosnian Muslims, who make up 44 per cent of the population of the ethnically mixed republic, came to an agreement with Belgrade, Serbia and Croatia might move to partition it.

Now there's an easier way to find out whether it's Intel inside.



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## Race for the White House

Election stirs  
US neurosis  
on Vietnam

FROM PETER STOTHARD, US EDITOR, IN WASHINGTON

THE unfinished business of the Vietnam war was supposed to have been ended last year by the military triumphs of the Gulf. For the American armed forces that was true: the veterans of Lai Kay and Long Binh could hold their heads high at last.

But for politicians such as Bill Clinton, among the Democratic runners, it was not true. Those who did not serve their country in the 1960s but who do want to serve it now face a hard time, maybe even harder because of the Gulf. Mr Clinton is spending the last days of his election primary campaign trying to shore up support that has been collapsing since the first revelations emerged of his efforts to avoid the Vietnam war draft in 1969.

Almost everyone who has written about this affair (and few political commentators have not written about it) preface their remarks with the warning that Mr Clinton, the Arkansas governor, was doing no more than millions of other students whose lives in the late 1960s were dominated by the war. Indeed, his behaviour in maximising his opportunity to avoid being drafted was, by common consent, more honourable than that of those people who led the draft and the country altogether.

Since he was then and is now an aggressive opponent of that Southeast Asia policy, his stance was arguably more honourable than that of Vice-President Dan Quayle who supported (and still supports) the policy but did not want to go and fight for it.

The cautionary notes have not helped Mr Clinton, however. He has become the conduit for all the suppressed fears and guilts of those who stayed away from Vietnam because their class, their education, their contacts or even their simple good luck kept them out of harm's way.

Many of the most sensitive are Mr Clinton's contemporaries in the press corps. On the day that the "draft evasion" story first appeared in

*The Wall Street Journal*, I was with the Clinton campaign in the foyer of the mock-Tudor Tara Hotel in Nashua, New Hampshire. Reporters crushed around him firing questions about LA and ID statuses, putting detailed challenges to him about dates and deferment rules.

They were talking about their own lives. None of them may have governed a state, or tried to reform a school system or even had the active extra-marital social life of which the governor has been accused. But they felt the heat of this issue as though it were a big cat breathing down their necks.

Mr Clinton answered the questions well. He has stood up courageously to attempts to suggest that he somehow falsified his record, that it was not a "Vietnam question" but a "character question" like that of his alleged misrepresentation of his relationship with Gennifer Flowers. But it is hard to start up against a current that is flowing so fast.

Two of his opponents, whom he had hitherto clearly beaten in the political argument, quickly claimed the patriotic card for their own. Senator Bob Kerrey, the most authentic war hero in the American presidential race this century, clearly did not relish the idea of wrapping himself in the flag. But he did it all the same.

Senator Tom Harkin, a veteran pilot, hit at the tenderest spot of all: the clarifying truth that Mr Clinton had lost his greatest asset, his electability. No party wants to saddle itself with a scapegoat, however much its members may believe that the charges are unfair.

Twice in the past, after the civil war and after the second world war, military service has been a longstanding test for presidential hopefuls. George Bush's war record was vital for him. So was John Kennedy's and Lyndon Johnson's.

In a political hotbed, *Saturday Review*, page 16



Hot reception: Michael Jackson, the American rock singer, with Ivory Coast children on arriving in Abidjan for a visit yesterday. He cancelled engagements and stayed in his hotel as students were arrested in the capital during violent protests against the government

New Hampshire chokes on  
forced diet of TV politics

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW Hampshire's couch potatoes can no longer return from work to a mindless evening of soaps, serials and old B-movies. With less than 100 hours left of the nation's pulsating first primary, the airwaves are saturated by grandiloquent politicians pounding one another and proclaiming that they alone can restore greatness to America.

Here, in a state uniquely empowered to bury or give birth to politicians' dreams, the punch-drunk candidates are now spending tens of thousands of dollars daily on frantic last-ditch pleading. WMUR, New Hampshire's main station, is carrying 160 political advertisements a day, each replete with stirring music, ubiquitous Stars

and Stripes, and shameless hyperbole.

Hounded by Patrick Buchanan, the right-wing columnist, President Bush typically appears 29 times a day on the station to appeal for Republican unity so he can "lead America to prosperity". With one poll yesterday giving Mr Bush a lead of only 17 points, the White House may well resort to advertisements focusing on Mr Buchanan's opposition to the Gulf war.

Mr Bush barely fades from the screen before Mr Buchanan appears, berating the president for three years of indifference to New Hampshire's suffering. "Together," says the fired-up conservative, "you and I can take back America and make it great again."

Democrat hopes of a painless primary that would unite the party behind their draft-drafty governor have really vanished. Bill Clinton, Vietnam's latest victim, films feverishly to staunch his haemorrhaging support. Arkansas citizens tell their New Hampshire counterparts what an upstanding man their governor is, while a Vietnam veteran says Mr Clinton has been "ambushed by an enemy almost as invisible as the Vietcong were".

Bob Kerrey's ninth new advertisement of the primary targets Mr Clinton by flaunting his own heroic Vietnam record and unimpeachable patriotism. Paul Tsongas, the new front-runner, ploughs up and down a swimming pool to counter a whispering campaign about whether he has conquered cancer. Tom Harkin, the working-class champ, claims all Democrats apart from him are neo-Republicans.

Commercials no longer interrupt the programmes; programmes punctuate the commercials. A Clinton sales pitch that lasted 30 minutes was immediately followed by a 30-minute commercial for Lyndon LaRouche, a fringe candidate who is in prison for fraud. Jerry Brown, former governor of California, periodically airs half-hour "infomercials" attacking political corruption.

By early this week the main candidates had spent well over \$3 million (£1.6 million) on advertising in New Hampshire, and that figure could double or triple by Tuesday. Saturated viewers are beginning to yearn for good old Burger King advertisements, but Mr Clinton will this weekend distribute 20,000 ten-minute videos to ram home his message.

Rival bidding for  
New York tabloid

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN NEW YORK

IN A move that caught New York's business world by surprise, Peter Kalikow, the bankrupt owner of the *New York Post*, has announced plans to bid for *The New York Daily News*, the ailing rival tabloid, which was taken over by Robert Maxwell months before he died.

Mr Kalikow, a property developer who bought the *Post* from the News Corporation four years ago, said he was making the move because combining the two newspapers was "the surest, and perhaps only opportunity for the News' survival". The *News*, which has fought bitter circulation wars with the *Post* for years, reacted coolly to Mr Kalikow's overture, suggesting that he join the queue of potential buyers. He was not, it pointed out, on the list of qualified investors who received prospectuses last week. *News* employees said on the television news that they rejected the idea.

Mr Kalikow's approach was unexpected because he had placed himself in personal bankruptcy last year, after the slump in the value of his property holdings. However, Mr Kalikow's creditors could conceivably support a deal because the *Post* is likely to lose its value should the *News* be bought by someone else and survive. The *New York Times* reported that it already had the backing of the Bankers' Trust Company — his main creditor — and that Mr Kalikow expects to make a cash offer of about \$50 million (£28.2 million).

Maxwell bought the *News* in a last-minute bid last

March, days before its owners were due to close it as a hopeless loss-maker. It sought protection under bankruptcy law from its creditors after Maxwell's death, declaring \$53 million in liabilities and \$37 million in assets.

Each newspaper has been struggling to survive in a market which most experts say is not big enough to sustain four big daily newspapers — *The New York Times*, the *Post*, the *News* and *New York Newsday*. Mr Kalikow's spokesman said he would not close the *Post* if he acquired the *News*, but all other options were open, including the possibility of relaunching it as the afternoon paper it once was. He might, for example, combine editorial or business operations while keeping the titles separate.

The *News* said in a statement that Mr Kalikow might not be a qualified potential investor. The *Daily News* investment bankers, Salomon Brothers, recently mailed a package of financial information about the newspaper to a handful of prospective buyers. "Salomon would be happy to conduct a detailed review of Mr Kalikow's financial condition prior to releasing any information about the *News*," the *News* said.

Other potential buyers include Mortimer Zuckerman, another property entrepreneur and owner of the *US News & World Report*, and Conrad Black, who controls Hollinger of Vancouver, the owner of 96 daily papers, including *The Daily Telegraph*.

Islamic  
march  
stopped

Algiers: The fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front yesterday called off its planned march through Algiers after riot police and heavily armed troops were deployed around the capital (Alfred Hermida writes). In the central area, paratroops took up positions around the Place des Martyrs, where the marchers had intended to gather.

There have been further attacks by Islamic extremists on the security forces in Algiers, but cancellation of the march avoided a large-scale showdown. Throughout the day police vans patrolled the area, with automatic rifles pointing out of windows. Plain-clothes officers armed with light sub-machineguns took up positions in shop doorways.

The heavy security presence did not altogether deter attacks on the security forces, however. A group of Islamic extremists attacked a police station on the edge of the old quarter, the kasbah, injuring several police officers.

## Talks resume

Port-au-Prince: After more than three weeks' debate, the Haitian senate agreed to resume talks with the ousted president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, aimed at solving the dispute over the country's leadership. (Reuters)

## Lock accused

Perth: Tony Lock, aged 62, the former England cricketer, appeared before magistrates at Perth, Western Australia, charged with aggravated indecent assault in 1987 on a girl aged 15. He was remanded until next month. (AP)

## Mother land

Reims: An Iranian who has lived in limbo for nearly three years at Charles de Gaulle airport near Paris can enter Britain to look for his mother after gaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, his lawyer said. (AFP)

## Animal passion

San Francisco: The zoo here offered St. Valentine's day tours to people wanting to learn animals' sexual habits. Guides pointed out, among other animals, lesbian geese and monkeys fitted with contraceptive devices. (Reuters)

## Dying wish

Ottawa: A Quebec woman identified as Nancy B. died after being disconnected from a respirator in accordance with her wishes. She had been paralysed for two and a half years with a rare neurological disorder.

## Love match

Adelaide: The Art Gallery of South Australia made a St Valentine's day announcement that it had bought an aluminium cast of Eros, the statue in Piccadilly Circus, London, for £180,000 to go on permanent display. (AFP)

## Miners killed

Johannesburg: Four miners were killed and four others were injured in an earth tremor at the Western Deep Levels South goldmine, near Carltonville.

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Getaway for less.

Ward 'may  
have been  
burnt'FROM SAM KILEY  
IN NAIROBI

JULIE Ward may have been burnt before being killed in a Kenyan reserve in 1988, a Cambridge university pathologist told the Nairobi high court yesterday at the murder trial of two game rangers.

Professor Geoffrey Gresham said that the remains of her left leg, cut from the rest of the limb at the knee, had been blackened by fire. But "blistering could have happened before death".

As details emerged of how Miss Ward's head was cut "from the base of the skull with a sharp heavy instrument while her head was bent forward", her mother Janet took shorthand notes. Miss Ward, whose husband John has spent three and a half years and £300,000 on bringing the alleged killers to book, has attended daily since the trial of Jonah Taju Magiroi and Peter Mutui Kipeen began on Monday.

Miss Ward's jaw was found with her charred and decomposing leg on September 13, 1988, a week after she disappeared while on safari in the Masai Mara reserve. Her skull was found a mile away.

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# Tokyo scandal prosecutors arrest company chiefs

FROM PETER STARR IN TOKYO

JAPANESE prosecutors yesterday arrested four businessmen allegedly involved in a new scandal, as politicians failed to agree on how to summon members of the ruling Liberal Democratic party linked to another scandal.

The arrests came a day after raids on the homes of former executives of Sagawa Kyubin, the parcel delivery group. Companies allegedly received loans from the group and the offices of Inagawa-kai, Japan's second-biggest gangster outfit.

Two of the arrested men, Hiroyasu Watanabe, the former president of Tokyo Sagawa Kyubin, and Jun Saotome, the company's former managing director, are suspected of breaching company trust. They allegedly extended 110 billion yen (\$490 million) in suspect loans and guarantees to the Heiwado property group and the Ichihara Resort Development Company, as well as Inagawa-kai and its affiliates. Yasuo Matsuzawa, the Heiwado president, and Michio Ouchi, the Ichihara accountant, were also arrested.

The figure is reportedly part of 900 billion yen in loans and guarantees provided to some 90 companies and

individuals since 1987. About 100 billion yen of this is thought to have ended up in the pockets of 200 members of parliament.

Liberal Democratic party leaders met opposition parties to discuss legal procedures for summoning Zenko Suzuki, the former prime minister, and Jun Shiozaki, the former cabinet minister. They are suspected of receiving monies from Kyowa, a steel-frame manufacturer, in return for political favours.

The ruling party bowed to opposition demands to approve the testimony in an effort to end their boycott of parliament, which has paralysed debate, including budget talks, for more than a week. But the parties failed to agree on the procedures and are to meet again today to try to resolve the impasse, reports said. The Liberal Democrats are baulking at opposition demands that the testimony by Mr Suzuki, aged 81, who was prime minister in 1980-2, should be subject to normal judicial procedures.

The opposition has so far failed to make the ruling party summon Fumio Abe, the man allegedly at the centre of the scandal. Mr Abe, the former head of the Liberal Dem-

ocratic party faction of Kiuchi Miyazawa, the prime minister, was charged this month with receiving bribes while he was minister in 1989 and 1990. The justice ministry intervened on Thursday to prevent Mr Abe from being forced to make a testimony, arguing that he was already the subject of legal action and that such a move could prejudice the outcome of his trial.

Mr Abe and the two other LDP members, who are also members of the Miyazawa faction, are suspected of receiving 500 million yen from Kyowa in return for favours. Opposition parties want to summon 21 people connected with the Kyowa affair as well as the four-year-old Recruit stocks-for-favours scandal, which led to the collapse of Noboru Takeshita's government in 1989.

The Liberal Democrats' loss of an upper house by-election on Sunday to an opposition candidate, who had focused his campaign on corruption, has fuelled the demands. The poll was seen as a prelude to the elections in July for the upper house, where the opposition has control. (AFP)

Nikkei plunges, page 18



Under arrest: Hiroyasu Watanabe, left, being taken to jail yesterday in Tokyo in connection with the loans scandal

## Hanoi and Peking sign pact

Hanoi: China and Vietnam, whose rivalry fuelled the Cambodia conflict, agreed to boost their economic co-operation and to help to ensure the success of the UN peace plan in Cambodia.

Nguyen Manh Cam, the Vietnamese foreign minister, told a joint press conference in Hanoi with Qian Qichen, the Chinese foreign minister, that Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, had accepted an invitation to visit Vietnam in the second half of the year. Mr Cam and Mr Qian signed an economic and travel agreement. (Reuters)

## Overwork fears

Tokyo: Most Japanese are afraid of dying from overwork, according to an opinion survey. Twenty-three per cent of those polled said they could not take holidays "out of respect for their superiors and their co-workers". (AFP)

## Taps run dry

Manila: The Philippine capital will be waterless for up to three days from today to allow installation of a flood control project. President Aquino has ordered the mayors of Manila and satellite towns to provide temporary supplies. (AFP)

## Crippled rider flies home

Jockey Sharron Murgatroyd was flown home by helicopter yesterday after spending five months in Oswestry hospital after her fall at a race in Bangor, Wales, last summer. Sharron, aged 31, a riding friend of the Princess Royal, was told she would never walk again after severing her spine when she fell. Paralysed from the neck down, she will have to adapt to life in her modified bungalow near the racing town of Newmarket. Top trainers and jockeys, including Henry and Julie Cecil and Lester Piggott, have raised money to carry out the work to her home.



Sharron Murgatroyd: modified bungalow

Princess Margaret, leading politicians and opera stars are to attend a huge fund-raising party for the charity, Victim Support, in London in April hosted by the freed hostage Terry Waite. The party, in honour of released hostages and those still captive, will be held near Mr Waite's home in Blackheath. Six hundred guests will attend, including Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, and fellow hostage John McCarthy.

The outgoing Hong Kong governor, Sir David Wilson, has taken the title of Lord Wilson of Tillyorn of Fanzean and Fanling, a government spokesman said. His life peerage was given in the Queen's New Year honours. Tillyorn is the name of the governor's family home in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, while Finzean is the name of the valley with which he has a family association dating from the early 18th century. Fanling in Hong Kong's New Territories is the governor's official rural residence.

Sir Richard Attenborough has been awarded the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize for 1992 in recognition of his long stage and film career. The 40,000 marks (£14,000) prize, offered annually by the FVS foundation, will be handed over in June at a ceremony in Hamburg.

## China has a splash of coffee

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING

AT THE Xinghua gardens bathhouse, it would seem a little pretentious if you asked for decaffeinated coffee. The waitresses do not even ask if you want milk and sugar. But then you are not expected to drink the coffee, you are expected to bathe in it.

For the Chinese yuppie, coffee baths are the newest heights of decadence. "We always use Nescafe or Maxwell House," said Cao Bao-cai, the manager, who knows his good name depends on foreign brands.

The bathhouse offers a range of gourmet baths, including Cleopatra-style milk, vinegar, and rice wine. "I have tried them all," said Mr Cao. So what did the coffee do for him? Mr Cao refers to an information sheet. "It invigorates you, helps the circulation, gets rid of stress." Did it really do all that for him? "Oh yes."

No city dwellers have hot water on tap. Some can shower in hot water at work. Most, however, still use public bathhouses, which are traditionally grimy, grey places where washing is best done as quickly as possible.

The Xinghua gardens bathhouse has been open since 1921, but three years ago Mr Cao realised that he should move with the times. So the bathhouse was refurbished for 5.2 million yuan (\$525,000) and reopened last month as a luxury establishment, complete with a gilt chandelier in the lobby. On average, 300 customers a day spend up to five hours wallowing in the hot water and pleasant surroundings.

A visit to an ordinary bathhouse costs about a yuan. A sauna and shower at Xinghua Gardens costs seven yuan. But the full works — including a back scrub, massage, sauna and steam bath, and the bath of your choice in a private room — can cost up to 55 yuan.

In a steamy, white-tiled private room the bath is half-filled with hot water. A middle-aged attendant in white overalls and black boots comes in bearing a plastic jug of bath essence, in this case black coffee.

"The coffee did nothing for me, but my skin was a shade darker when I came out," said one customer. Many prefer a milk bath, guaranteed to leave your skin soft and smooth.

Men and women are segregated inside the bathhouse. Women sit around naked in armchairs in their common room, their hair in plastic caps. Others read soggy newspapers in a crowded sauna. The rooms are clean. Just sometimes, however, in the men's section, customers forget where they are and spit on the floor.



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## Clifford Longley

**Women who want to become priests should see a vocation as their duty, and not as a matter of equal rights**

The concept of vocation is one of the casualties of an age that sanctions self-interest as a virtuous motive for personal choice. Vocation referred not just to a life dedicated to the church, but also provided a religious way of looking at all other trades and professions. Vocations were regarded as "callings". The person or thing doing the calling was usually God, but sometimes He called through a surrogate, the state or the community acted as His channel. But in every case an individual became a clergyman — or doctor, soldier, teacher, writer, even cobbler — because that was what God wanted.

The "call", though from God, was described as if heard from an inner voice, like the voices of conscience, but that did not usually mean an actual voice, as in a vision or hallucination. Obeying a vocation meant following God's will, a moral duty that overrode personal preferences. But a career, the modern idea that has replaced vocation, means following one's own will. Vocation implies a highly ambivalent attitude to ambition and promotion, which may be God's will but may not be. But a career is about rights, equality of opportunities, employment protection laws and the quest for personal fulfilment. Vocations are essentially noble, careers only rarely so, and then by accident.

This eclipse of the notion of vocation has not been confined to the secular realm; it has penetrated far into the internal affairs of the church — although, confusingly, the word is still used there (while now meaning the modern idea of career). It is revealing to listen to the irritable exchanges in the Anglican debate about women priests, which is about to resume in next week's General Synod meeting, while filtering out the pros and cons of the issue itself in order to concentrate only on hearing the upper resonances. What world view do the speakers hold? What view of God and His action?

It quickly becomes apparent from the higher harmonies of the argument that both sides share an impoverished idea of "priestly vocation", by which they mean, in mundane fact, a career in the church. Having to give up such a career (on the part of the anti) or not being allowed to start such a career (on the part of the pro) is presented as a cause of pain, the avoidance of which is an imperative all are deemed to share. What follows is the mutual moral blackmail of "my pain is worse than your pain", which if it continues much longer will do more damage to the Church of England than ordaining (or not ordaining) women could ever do.

No more edifying is the claim of married men who suffer the "pain" of exclusion from the Roman Catholic priesthood, as if they were being denied a right. In career terms, such discrimination is as unjust as discrimination against women. Indeed, if the ordination of women or married men is presented as a question of equal career opportunities, there

can only be one answer. But any talk of rights automatically eliminates the concept of vocation. There is no such thing as a "right to be called", less still a "right to test whether one is called or not".

The recognition of a vocation, traditionally, meant: "Never mind the inconvenience or what I want to do, this is a demand from God." Those great moments in Christian history when a vocation was recognised and accepted by such people as Thomas à Becket, Luther, Ignatius, Wesley and Florence Nightingale involved painful obedience and considerable risk. The vocation did not guarantee personal fulfilment. The emotional reaction of the recipient of the call, whether pain, hurt or joy, was as irrelevant in deciding the correct response as the feelings which went with any other moral choice.

Vocation is a specific instance of a broader concept, that of providence, known, since the ancient Greeks, as a divine watchfulness and guidance over the affairs of mankind. Pre and post-Christian concepts of providence, such as Stoicism or Marxism, assumed a rationality that governed human destiny and ultimately left man-kind little scope to change it. One kind little scope to change it.

**When a vocation was recognised it involved painful obedience and risk**

One could row with the tide or row against it, but there was no doubt which way it flowed. Providence, in Christian terms, allows for freedom, but does not guarantee progress. The eschatos, the goal of history, is actually outside history. It may come tomorrow, or never. The New Testament idea of providence follows closely on God's relationship with Israel in the Old, a mysterious friendship between the creator and the created which, while not sparing pain nor preventing trouble, brings all things out for the best in the end. Trust is the crucial idea in relation to providence and so, therefore, is faith in a benign personal God.

It should not be surprising that the collapse in confidence in the notion of providence follows the growth of secularism. In modern culture, the ghost of the idea of providence is now only present in the guiding hand of the author of fiction or drama over the lives of their characters. But if the Christian (or Jewish) idea of providence says the overall plan of history is invisible, it does, nonetheless, offer a role for everybody in that plan, a role that is knowable. Finding that role and playing it is the same as hearing a call and answering it. There may be no mystery about it, no need to read the tea-leaves. A strong faith in providence eliminates the need to survive mightily in order to find God's will. It is enough to obey one's conscience, do one's duty and behave morally, and to be generally and willingly available.

In that state of mind whatever happens next is God's will, a local fragment of the providential plan for universal salvation. It is not required to listen hard for the whisperings of an inner voice. The divine message might just as well be found hiding in the siss vac columns.

**Ronald Payne investigates why the rural French scorn Britons who live beside them**

## Spoiling a country idyll

feelings towards the Dutch, Anglo-Saxons or even the Saxons." M le Gallou-declared. "But come the day when 80 per cent of the population of the Dordogne are English, it will no longer be the Dordogne, even if the English there are very amiable."

In French eyes it is difficult to imagine anyone more foreign than *les anglais*. In the Dordogne, Normandy and Provence, those areas of France where *néo-colours* from the foggy island on the edge of Europe have settled, they do stand out. British householders always seem to be messily dressed whereas French equivalents tend to be smartly clothed, as English country gentry used to be. Only a few years ago it was generally believed that Englishmen would always look like Le Major Thompson, of the Pierre Dammis skis.

Our expatriates generally draw attention to themselves by setting up little England cocoons, such as Dordogne league cricket clubs, restaurants and local newspapers. But these seem harmless enough diversions, more likely to cause amusement than to let slip any great wave of local hostility. In general, rural France regards the holidaymakers and second-home-makers with the same detached curiosity and amazement, that

West Country and Welsh folk show towards semi-attached "brockles" who take up weekend cottage space in their rural communities.

Few real farmers choose to buy land in France. So the French National Front is wrong to worry about the settlers displacing local agriculturalists from their traditional homes. The truth is that both in France and in England genuine country people are only too pleased to sell uncomfortable ancient buildings at a profit so as to take up residence in purpose-built modern bungalows full of gadgets. Some people, it has to be said, are more warmly welcome as rural newcomers than others. Top of the league come celebrities, preferably from stage or screen, but at a pinch authors and footballers will do.

Any guaranteed celebrity is immune from criticism and becomes a cherished possession. Peter Mayle is a good example. He has written in such heart-warming fashion about the idyllic life of Provence as to become a permanent inhabitant of the best-seller list. Sounding out local opinion about the famous English resident, whose work all admired but few had read (it not being available in translation), I found that French neighbours were proud of him, but scornful of less famous foreigners in the district.

A stout pinafored countrywoman I consulted by the roadside knew at once where to find *l'écrivain anglais*. "Apart from him," she said, "there's nothing but foreigners along this road — Germans, Dutch, English." And she added with some distaste, "Et les parisiens", which would, I suppose, include National Frontist Gallou, from the Ile-de-France. It all goes to show that it is easiest to hate the devil that you know most intimately.

## I must not be forgotten

**After three years living under the Iranian death threat Salman Rushdie calls on Britain not to sell him out**

SALLY SOAMES



Rushdie, fatwa victim: do not sacrifice my case for improved diplomatic relations with Iran

After three years of such confusions and obfuscations, we must state certain things with absolute clarity.

So, *Satanic Verses* is a serious novel, a moral novel, and as good a novel as I am able to write. It is not an unreadable novel. It is neither filthy nor degrading nor abusive. The Muslim attack on the book depends on denying me any intellectual credibility at all, depends on denying the text any merit whatsoever, on a refusal to discuss it as a work of art. But it is neither a work of non-fiction nor a polemical tract against Islam. It is neither filthy nor trash nor garbage. It is not what they say it is. It is a work of art.

Nowhere in the entire catalogue of human rights will you find the Right Not To Be Offended. If such

a right existed, all of us would be silenced. Offence is not, and must never be, a reason for censorship in a free society.

If we are talking about offence, however, let's weigh a few things in the balance. On the one hand, we have a novel. On the other, we have censorship, threats to publishers and their families, intimidation of booksellers, firstbombs in bookstores, incitement to murder, children hung with sandwich boards reading "I am ready to kill him", public vilifications, terrorist threats from a foreign power, multi-million dollar offers of bounty money, the knifing of one translator, the murder of another. Which is the real insult? Which is the real offence?

A distinguished Saudi novelist is stripped of his citizenship, and

what's the charge? He has been anti-Islamic. An Egyptian novelist, his publisher and printer are jailed for eight years, and what's the charge? Blasphemy again. They, too, have been anti-Islamic. At the Cairo Book Fair, many books are seized. What's the reason? Well, you see, these books are anti-Islamic, too. In Iran itself, of course, they have been murdering their writers for years.

This isn't about religion. It's about repression. It's about power. The attack on intellectuals in the Muslim world is no different from the attack on dissident intellectuals in the old Soviet Union. Why is it that only the latter are held in such high esteem? Can it be that religion legitimises persecution, that the activities of a terrorist state, or the founding by a

community of its dissident artists, is OK as long as it is godly?

The British government has repeatedly stated that improved relationships with other countries will be linked to those countries' human rights records. Iran has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

Much has been written of late about my relationship with the British government. One Sunday newspaper has suggested that the government is preparing a "great betrayal", that the Rushdie case will be sidelined and full relations with Iran speedily restored. I don't want to believe this. I have no wish to be in an adversarial relationship with the British government, because it has protected me and remains my best hope of a solution, but I wish that the government would make it a little easier for me to believe that they're strongly and resolutely on my side.

It is clear that there is a crunch coming; that during the next months, there is going to be a major sorting out of this country's relationship with Iran. And what I hope all of us are here tonight to say is that any deal with Iran which excludes a full, public and effective settlement of the Rushdie case will be unacceptable. Not just to a special-pleading bunch of writers and lecturers, but, I believe, to all the British people. The hostages have come out of the Lebanon. There is no longer any reason for the Rushdie case to be soft-pedalled. It will never fade away. It can only be fixed at the government level. So this has become a simple political question: how hard will the British government push? The answer to that question is, to an extent, in our hands. Politicians are sensitive to public opinion. The louder we shout, the harder they push.

A friend, far more skilled in diplomacy than I, gave me the following piece of good advice: "In politics, it's the squeaky wheel that gets oiled." This distinguished assembly represents one loud squeak of the wheel. All over the world, today and in the next few days, other wheels will be squeaking for freedom. And we will just go on and on squeaking until we are well and truly oiled.

This is an edited version of Mr Rushdie's speech given at the Stationers' Hall last night.



...and moreover

**PHILIP HOWARD**

They spell it Vinci, and pronounce it Vinchy. Those pesky foreigners always spell better than they pronounce. Correct spelling, or typography, is one of the trickier departments of English grammar, because English is a hotch-potch or hodgepodge of more languages than any other under the palate or over the tongue. Ever since Bede started to write it down, beautifully, there have been intermittent attempts to simplify our spelling, by making it phonetic.

The flaw with these proposals is that they would not make it simpler. For one thing, whose pronunciation would our new model spelling try to represent in letters? That of Belfast, where a lake is a hole in a kettle? We can no longer pretend that the best way to pronounce English is the nasal drawl that used to be called the Oxford accent, and is now described as Standard English. For most of the English-speaking world this sounds odd, or quaint, or charming, or patronising, depending on the auditor's taste and disposition. But most of them do not want to talk like that. So, why should they be made to spell like that?

For another thing, the spelling of a word preserves its history. To destroy the fossilised past at a stroke would be as vandalistic as wiping out a Tudor town centre to replace it with concrete cubes, on the grounds that the modern architecture is more efficient. The English way is to let things evolve naturally, whether they

are towns, or the constitution, or spelling. Whenever we have gone in for root-and-branch reconstruction, whether of our counties or our government, the result has been catastrophic.

There is a kind of spelling reform going on that has the same effect as a bulldozer on a Roman foundation. It is invented by advertising copywriters and designers as an orthographic pun, to catch your eye and make you snigger. Consider the Joyce RTE family, as in Startrite and Waretite. Parents who would be appalled at squeezing their children's feet into shoes that were too small for them, do not seem to worry about squeezing this stunted spelling of right onto them.

You get LITE instead of Light, as in the beer, Miller Lite, as an insouciant yob spelling. The letter Q brings out the goat in admen. So we get Kwells and Kwiksave. This supermarket would look classier as Quicksave. Kwik looks to me like a representation of someone clearing his throat before spitting PRUF for proof is another pathetic adman's joke, as in Childpruf, applied to those medicine bottles that break your nails as you try to get the lids off. Grammar has not yet invented a name for this barbarous type of phonetic spelling. Can we coin a new word, ADSPEL, which has the advantage of being an example of the phenomenon it describes?

Spelling is not the most important part of grammar or of good writing. Shakespeare spell-

ed his name in 13 different ways, in a period before printing and pedagogues had standardised orthography.

The Prince of Wales is for once correct when he says that the young are not as good at spelling as his generation. We did long and obscure spelling bees of tricky words every day, and were severely punished if we got them wrong. I can still spell "diarrhoea" and "eschscholozia" without pausing to think about it, because they are embedded in my memory and the seat of my pants. The "i" in the middle of the latter is best preserved, because it records a bit of history. The name of the California Poppy was given to it in 1821 by A. von Chamisso, in compliment to J.F. von Eschscholtz, a colleague.

Being able to spell is a trivial accomplishment. Spelling has constantly changed over the years, and will continue to do so. But it does so gradually and empirically, preserving the fossils of its past. That is the English way, and a better way than Adspel. Spelling correctly does not make you a better writer or a better person. But if somebody cannot take trouble with the trivialities of English, the question arises whether he (she) can be trusted with important matters.

Spelling is romantic. Believe it. *Natrix* the Latin water snake becomes a nadder, which becomes our adder. An unpure is mis-spelled from a non-pure, a third man called in to decide between two.

## Prince recycles royal warrants

THE Prince of Wales has issued his strongest warning yet that those who supply goods by royal appointment must prove their greenness if they wish to retain the royal seal of approval.

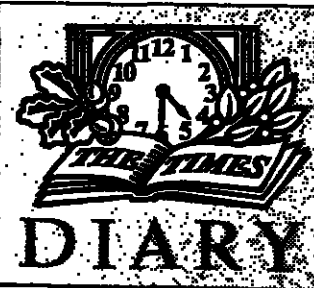
The Prince has been lobbying his own royal warrant holders for nearly two years, but this week upped the pressure with an open threat to all those who supply other members of the royal family. If they do not satisfy environmental criteria, companies have been told they may find themselves removed from the royal approved list.

The Royal Warrant Holders Association, in a letter sent this week to its 890 members, ranging from Harrods to Jaguar cars, warns that in the light of the prince's views "it would be prudent" if they were in future to include a statement on their environmental policy in their annual reports.

A "directive" from the Prince of Wales's office will follow shortly, setting out the green criteria that companies will be expected to meet.

The annual report of the association, sent to members this week, reveals that the prince met six members of its council three months ago and made it clear that all companies would be expected to conduct "an initial environmental review".

Some warrant holders may find it harder than others. The Adair, Tobaccon Company and JCI, for example, have few friends at present among environmentalists. A Palace spokeswoman says: "Warrants won't be revoked but when they are reviewed every ten years, if companies don't meet the standards, the warrant won't be renewed."



How green is green? According to the Simmons Market Research Bureau, Britain can now be divided into five distinct shades: Premium Green (22 per cent of the population, seriously green); Red, White & Green (20 per cent, outdoors, but not ecologically so); No-Cost Ecologist (28 per cent, vocally green, but needs to not match words); Conscientious Green (11 per cent willing to pay for a clean planet). And the rest? "Unconcerned."

## Rare privilege

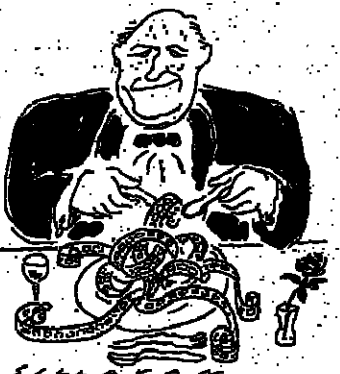
THOSE who have been on the receiving end of the legal skills of Peter Carter-Ruck will be interested to learn that Britain's most famous libel lawyer has been defamed — and there is nothing he can do about it. Under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, has tabled a motion attacking companies, like Eurocity "whose financial might is directed at gagging all media criticism". What does he mean?

Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners were hired by Eurocity to handle an investigation by BBC Television's *Watchdog* last week. But the "gagging all media criticism" turns out to be little more than asking the Beeb to fund questions through Carter-Ruck — hardly a

case of the old Maxwell ploy of the gagging writ. Under normal circumstances Carter-Ruck would surely expect to clean up over such a serious allegation. Yesterday, for once, he seemed frustrated. "It is bad enough what I have to put up with from Private Eye," he said.

## Major mystery

What on earth was Neil Kinnock on about at the champagne socialist's ball at the Park Lane hotel? Perhaps it was the excitement of sitting next to David Puttnam or



his eagerness to impress an audience that included Melvyn Bragg, but speech comparing John Major to the film-maker Jean-Luc Godard was as lost to our readers. In the Sixties, Godard was present as it must be to our readers. In the Sixties, Godard was signed up to make *The Technique of Political Murder*. That film was never made, so perhaps Kinnock was referring to another Godard classic, said to be a favourite in Downing Street. Two or Three Things I Know About Her.

## Marginal interest

A LABOUR MP in a marginal constituency is caught in bed with

the Liberal Democrat candidate's wife. Relax, it is the plot of a new comedy, *A Marginal Affair*, which is due to open in the very week many now expect the election to be called.

Far from having second thoughts about the timing, Tim Starkey, of the Forum theatre in Manchester, where the play will open in the second week of March, says: "The play was written a year ago and we couldn't have written a better script. We might even invite Neil Kinnock and Paddy Ashdown to the first night."

But Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs are not amused by the play, set in a "fictional" marginal constituency in the north of England called Ashfield. On being told the news yesterday, Frank Haynes, the Labour MP for the real-life Nottinghamshire marginal bearing the same name said: "Flipping heck! I have been happily married for 44 years. Not everyone will think this is funny. They should postpone it until after polling day. I am retiring at the election and I'd quite like to see it — when I am no longer the MP."

Meriel Dickinson, a soprano at the English National Opera, might have recalled the words of W.C. Fields about appearing with children and animals after the first night of Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* at the English National Opera this week. When Dickinson came on stage to announce she was going to walk Queenie, the dog, a cairn terrier, promptly sat down and refused to budge. No amount of persuasion could move her and the hapless soprano was reduced to dragging the dog off stage right, to the obvious amusement of the audience. Queenie later made a reappearance but Ms Dickinson was taking no chances; Queenie was carried on and off again in her arms.





## SIRENS OF RACISM

Squeezed by the pressures of an impending election, the asylum bill appears doomed for the time being for lack of parliamentary time. If as a result the Tories forgo the playing the racial card in the election campaign, something good will have come out of the loss.

The replacement of Margaret Thatcher by John Major might have been expected to produce a government more liberal in its attitude to race. Mrs Thatcher was aware of the populist appeal of racism. Immediately after she made her "swamping" remarks about immigration in January 1978, the Conservatives rose five points in the opinion polls. During her tenure support for the National Front all but evaporated.

Mr Major claims to be passionate in his hatred of racism. Why then were his ministers so frantic to get the potentially inflammatory asylum bill on the pre-election agenda? Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, formally announced the bill to the House of Commons last year's Tory party conference, where he accused his Labour opposite number of "attempting to pander to ethnic minorities". His supposed crackdown on "bogus" refugees inspired a stream of vitriol in the popular press against a "flood" of illegal immigrants. Mr Major should tell his ministers to button their lips in the run-up to the election, even if a bill would still be introduced should he win.

Whichever party is the victor, legislation on asylum must come. Applications for political asylum to Britain reached 50,000 last year, ten times the average over the 1980s. Labour admits the problem, though its proposed bill would concentrate on removing delays. The Tories' bill had its flaws, notably in the brevity of the appellate process, but the government is right to want to cut short the limbo suffered by those whose applications for admission languish for months and years.

With or without a new bill, more civil servants and faster procedures were needed for handling applications. Yet Britain has

few of the pressures of some other European states. Over 250,000 refugees applied for asylum in Germany last year and 400,000 are expected this year. Germany's constitution, drawn up in 1949, enshrines rights of asylum that are more liberal than other EC countries. Germany plays host to 60 per cent of all refugees to the EC. Its constitution may be hospitable; its people are less so.

Refugees used to be put up in hostels until such accommodation became too vulnerable to attacks by neo-Nazis. The government has had to move many refugees into guarded camps. Last month, a British high-court judge ruled that a refugee who had fled from Sudan to Germany and thence to Britain should be allowed to stay here, because if he were sent back to Germany, he would be in danger of attack. So refugees are now fleeing from the persecution of refugees.

Meanwhile there has been a rise in support for extreme right-wing parties over much of Europe. Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front party in France has overtaken the Socialists in opinion polls ahead of local elections in the Paris region next month. Anti-immigrant parties in Italy, Austria and Belgium are reaping votes.

Spain's prime minister, Felipe González, has just warned that illegal immigration is one of the main problems facing Spain and the EC. Refugees and immigrants are indeed a Europe-wide phenomenon. Once borders come down at the end of this year they will aim for the easiest point of entry, both to the east and the south of the EC, hoping then to move freely within the Community. Britain cannot conceivably dismantle all border controls, least of all when other states will certainly be re-erecting theirs.

At the same time, a co-ordinated immigration and asylum policy across the EC is essential. The issue will not vanish. It is becoming the most explosive in all Europe. Some Europe-wide agreement on frontier controls and asylum criteria might at least stiffen the resolve of democratic politicians to resist the seductions of racism.

## BATTLE FOR AN ARMY

Nothing is more dangerous to the stability of a nation than a large impoverished army of humiliated men, aimless, leaderless and resentful. The Soviet Army, once a mighty force of over four million men, is now huddled in rotting barracks and temporary camps while the leaders of Russia and Ukraine argue over its future. Failure to agree on the control, financing, size and function of an army that Russia wants to keep together and Ukraine wants to split into national armies will undermine the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

President Yeltsin and President Kravchuk drew back at their meeting in Minsk yesterday from open confrontation, knowing the cost to themselves, their economies and hope of democracy and reform. But Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova have rejected even a plan for a two-year transition to national armies and insist on going ahead with the creation of their own forces, based on the hardware and manpower now on their territories. Russia is still paying for the Soviet Army and has little room for compromise.

Embittered and indoctrinated Soviet Army officers, still hankering after a united country and angry at Mr Yeltsin's "betrayal" of Soviet power, have spoken in the Russian parliament in support of the former communist apparat. Vice-president Aleksandr Ruskoj has raised the banner of internal revolt against price rises and privatisation, and against Russia ceding any more power to its "ungrateful" former empire. Mr Yeltsin has already had to miss a meeting with James Baker for emergency talks with the officers of the Black Sea fleet. Three weeks ago he quelled army discontent at a mass meeting that led to substantial pay rises.

The bulk of the Soviet Army is stationed in Russia. Conditions have always been bad, especially for conscripts, but as the standard of living for civilians plummets, the army, with large food and fuel stocks, is relatively better off. However, conscription has virtu-

ally broken down and draft-dodging is widespread. Non-Russian soldiers are slipping away to their republics. The troops returning to Russia from Eastern Europe and those due back from the Baltic republics have nowhere to go: most of the new barracks promised by Germany are for Ukraine. Mr Yeltsin wants to cut numbers by at least 15 per cent and phase out conscription. But the economy cannot absorb more unemployed and a disbanded army of the dissatisfied is a greater danger than a force still subject to discipline.

Russia will probably take over the old Soviet defence ministry, and the rump of the Soviet Army will become the Russian army. But any attempt to enforce Russian military authority in Ukraine would provoke an immediate clash. Untrammelled sovereignty has been the one consistent demand of Kiev, underestimated by Mr Gorbachev and Mr Yeltsin. Confrontation is less likely with the Central Asian republics. They have little sense of statehood and no wish for a big standing army, however much they may need troops to counter internal ethnic unrest.

Mr Yeltsin must know that Ukraine will go its own way. An eventual compromise may be found in the sensible formula put forward yesterday by Nursultan Nazarbayev, the wily Kazakh leader. He called for a defence union modelled on Nato, and already military officials have been asking Nato details of how it is organised and how sovereign armies can have a unified command. Nato has already set up regular meetings with Eastern European leaders, and next month foreign ministers will welcome their counterparts from all 11 republics.

The West is already helping with the dismantlement of nuclear warheads. It must now use the tested forum of Nato to show that sovereignty and co-operation in defence are compatible. Military suspicions and national rivalries in the former Soviet Union are now the greatest threat to world peace.

## POINT OF DECIMAL

The United Kingdom is celebrating the anniversary of the expulsion of an ogre: the ogre of counting its money by twelves and twenties. Decimalisation and metrication were introduced to jerk British commerce and science into harmony with the rest of the world, in order to make them more efficient. Today the Royal Mint announces that decimalisation has come of age. This suggests that the country is not yet entirely regimented into tens, since what is being commemorated is the February 15 of 21 years ago, not the most decimal of numbers.

The decimalisation of the coinage to make life tidier and rescue schoolchildren from long division of pounds, shillings and pence had been mooted for more than three centuries. Plantagenet Palliser staked his reputation on it. The tentative British move towards the change was started in 1849, with the introduction of the florin, representing two shillings. Never mind that the name was coined from the 13th-century gold piece of Florence, which had that city's fleur-de-lis on the reverse.

The British florin represented a tenth of a pound and was accordingly undeniably decimal. It was much disliked at the time, being known as the "godless" florin because it omitted F. D. (Fidei Defensor, defender of the faith), and the "graceless" florin, because it omitted the usual *Dei Gratia* (by the grace of God). People resent and fear change in the change in their pockets more than any other change imposed by their masters.

The coin will roll full circle this autumn. A smaller 10p is being introduced in September to replace the current "florin", the last

surviving pre-decimal coin. Coins will then come in a roughly ascending scale of size to match their value. The ugly 50p heptagons will still make holes in trouser pockets through which the tiny 5p and worthless 1p discs will slip down into socks. And the Queen's image, looking miraculously as it did 40 years ago, will remain the one constant in our continually changing coinage. And shortage of money rather than the numeration system of the coinage will remain the problem for most people.

The shift to decimalisation and metrication has been patchy and has not brought all the benefits that were promised by the neophiles. Britons are slowly believing that 21C means almost as pleasant a day as 70F. But they still boast about how many miles to the gallon their cars can do. The standardisers of Brussels graciously permit them to drink pints rather than litres of draught beer and to have pintas delivered to their early morning doorsteps. In Brussels-Speak, these are non-transferable goods and therefore not market-distorting. Even the most energetic English milkman is not going to deliver pints to the doorstep of Jacques Delors.

Old measures do represent human sizes. The inch is the top joint of the thumb; the foot proclaims its corporeal origin; and the yard is a more natural stride than a metre for the average man. Americans stick to their miles and inches, pints and gallons, rather than metres and litres. Yet they are not abused as efficiency-averse conservatives. Humankind does not live by decimals alone. But they are easier to count by, so long as Britons are born with five digits to a hand.

## Coping with peril of aircraft fires

From Dr Ian R. Hill

Sir, As the pathologist who analysed the findings of the Manchester air disaster of August 1985, I have followed with interest the correspondence (February 11) on sprinkler systems for aircraft. I am one of the people who proposed the idea of smoke hoods or masks. This proposal was not, as Mr James Tye suggests in his letter, an easy option. It was based upon the knowledge gained from this accident and a study of previous events.

People quickly become incapacitated in fires. They may then fall over, blocking the escape routes for others. If they survive they will sustain smoke-inhalation injury, which may lead to chronic lung problems.

It has been suggested that smoke hoods may delay the evacuation of aircraft. This is based upon tests using non-toxic smoke, thus the results are not really relevant to the real world of aircraft fires because the effects of incapacitation are not there.

Sprinklers may well solve the problem, but the evidence presented by researchers and manufacturers at the meeting organised by the Civil Aviation Authority at Gatwick last May showed that many questions remain unanswered. It would seem therefore to be somewhat premature to hail them as the answer. Before this can be done we will have to be assured that they not only put out the fire but that they make the atmosphere safe to breathe. Also, of course, any sprinkler system must not interfere with the aircraft's systems and structure.

In the meantime, mindful of the risks of aircraft fires, I and my family will continue to carry our smoke hoods every time we fly.

Yours faithfully,  
IAN R. HILL,  
The London Hospital Medical College,  
Department of Forensic Medicine,  
Turner Street, E1,  
February 13.

## Somerville's mixture

From Professor M. C. Bradbrook, FBA

Sir, Somerville's image ("Female bastion of academia, to surrender status", later editions, February 4) has been more fiercely feminist than Girton's in the present century; its buildings are smaller and cooler. The principal of Somerville said in the Eighties that "whenever the balance tips in the need to do so, we shall change".

As Mistress of Girton (1968-76), when I heard that King's was going mixed I felt first that my titer had struck an iceberg. It has not gone down. There are still more women teaching fellows alone at Girton than in 1976 (27 against 24). Those who agonise over the decision hope that the gamble will succeed for Somerville as it has for Girton.

And what will happen to Newnham and New Hall at Cambridge? Yours sincerely,  
MURIEL BRADBROOK,  
91 Chesterton Road, Cambridge,  
February 12.

## Muck into fuel

From Mrs Teresa Gorman, MP for Billericay (Conservative)

Sir, I must correct the impression given by Matthew Parris in his political sketch today that my question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was anything other than serious and straightforward.

I referred to the enterprise of Cory Environmental, which has set up a new plant at Mucking Flats in my constituency, to convert methane gas from London's waste into electricity and sell it to the national grid. It is commonplace at question time for MPs to draw attention to innovation of this sort and I am surprised that any other interpretation could be placed on my comments.

Yours faithfully,  
TERESA GORMAN,  
House of Commons,  
February 13.

## Order of the bath

From the Reverend Andrew Body

Sir, I am grateful for the statistics on Britain's bathroom activities (report, February 12). Letters (February 14). We find that our old-fashioned and generous sized bath is the only convenient place in which to wash out our musical son's tuba.

Yours sincerely,  
ANDREW BODY,  
St Mary's Vicarage,  
22 Harlow Oval,  
Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

## Clergy job losses

From the Reverend E. M. T. Underhill

Sir, In your report of February 12 on clergy job losses in the Durham diocese you refer to the suspension of the right of presentation to all freeholds as another of the diocesan "rationalisation" plans.

In the letter from the bishops announcing these plans there is a third prong to the package: apart from half-a-dozen or so newly ordained deacons, no appointments will be made from outside the diocese in the foreseeable future.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

## Accountants putting office in order

From the President, Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and others

Sir, Accountancy reform, far from being neglected as your leading article (February 10) seems in part to suggest, has become almost a way of life for the profession in the past two to three years and began well before the corporate collapse of 1991 focused attention on the responsibilities of directors and auditors.

Apart from the work of the Accounting Standards Board and the Auditing Practices Board which you mention, the profession was instrumental in setting up the Cadbury committee on the financial aspects of corporate governance, in part because we were concerned about the pressure which the current system can place on the vital independence of the auditor.

Our three institutes have recently been given powers under the Companies Act to regulate auditing work, including direct inspection of practices for the first time. This move, which will enable us to fulfil the public interest obligations of our royal charters more effectively, represents the most dramatic increase in the regulation of the profession for a generation.

The professional bodies have also overhauled and strengthened their disciplinary arrangements, and later this month the three institutes will be publishing a new guide to professional ethics.

Our institutes are looking forward to seeing the outcome of the Cadbury committee's work, with a view to implementing its recommendations. Our own work to ensure that ethical standards keep pace with new trends in business can never be completed. That "quiet life" which you mention is certainly no longer available, but we do believe that the profession has already put in hand the necessary changes to satisfy all reasonable critics. Those changes now need time to work.

Yours faithfully,  
IAN McNEIL, President,  
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,  
IAN TEGNER  
(President, Scotland),  
THOMAS O'HIGGINS  
(President, Ireland),  
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,  
PO Box 433, Moorgate Place, EC2.

## From Mr P. E. Shirley

Sir, As a former partner in a firm of major accountants I believe that the problem of high charges is not the amount the partners take but the bureaucratic and wasteful ways in which they run their businesses.

Since the abolition of the 20-partner limit in 1967 professional

partnerships have become ever larger. More and more time of senior partners has been absorbed in management and administration and less on client business.

Firms earn their large fees by delegating work to junior staff. A senior partner who takes a day to do some work at £300 an hour is better value and will probably provide a better service than a manager at £100 an hour who takes a week.

More effective competition would be obtained by breaking accounting firms into smaller units. This would reduce conflicts of interest and promote competition.

For example, accountants are making large sums out of major liquidations because of their ability to put large numbers of audit staff who, as a result of the recession would otherwise not be working, onto major liquidations to do mundane work. If insolvency firms were separated from audit firms they could make separate bargains for such staff and there would be more rigorous control over what staff are actually needed.

Yours faithfully,  
PHILIP SHIRLEY,  
P. E. Shirley & Co.  
(Chartered accountants),  
24 Lime Street, EC3.

## From Mr Donald B. Butcher

Sir, Your leader comments on the professional role of the accountant throughout the life and sometimes death of the company, but you do not refer to the fact that many British companies are run by boards dominated by those with accountancy training. This is not surprising since the UK has so many accountants per head of population.

Clearly people want to employ their talents if only to defeat the self-imposed complexity of our tax system, to take but one example. Presumably only a minority of us think and act otherwise.

Mr John Chitcock (letter, February 12) rightly quotes Mr Akio Morito, chairman of Sony Corporation, as expressing astonishment at the many UK corporations run by chartered accountants rather than by chief executives with an understanding of engineering. Perhaps Ogden Nash had a point:

Professional people have no cares,  
Whatever happens, they get theirs.

Yours faithfully,  
DONALD B. BUTCHER,  
(Management and engineering consultant),  
12 Burgh Heath Road,  
Epsom, Surrey,  
February 12.

any BBC rental charges are subject to regulation by Ofel.

Yours sincerely,  
BILL DENNAY  
(Director of Engineering),  
British Broadcasting Corporation,  
White City, 201 Wood Lane, W12.

From the Chairman of Classic FM  
Sir, There is no evidence to justify the statement in your leader that the INRI licence-holder, Classic FM, "has already been in trouble".

Classic FM's fund-raising was over-subscribed; our media shareholders include Time Warner, Associated Newspapers and GWR Group; our initial approaches to potential media clients have met with an excellent response; we are currently in the process of constructing our national transmitter network; and we are planning to open for business in the second half of this year.

We are also looking forward to the arrival of the second and third INRI licence-holders, when awarded, adding further to the impact of national independent advertising as an entertainment and advertising medium.

Yours faithfully,  
HENRY MEAKIN,  
Chairman, Classic FM,  
Aspen House, Christ Church,  
Cowsey Street, NW1.

been selected from the options, and then only an assessment of the impact of the selected route.

How can an intelligent choice of route be made without such an assessment? What is the purpose of an assessment after the decision has already been taken? It can only be an expensive and meaningless whitewash.

The Community's proposals would end this farce and provide a real safeguard against uninformed desecration of this — and other — landscapes of outstanding natural beauty.

Yours faithfully,  
R. L. VIGARS,  
24 Cope Place, W8.

## EC and environment

From Mr R. L. Vigars

Sir, The European Community's proposals for environment assessments to be carried out at the beginning of the planning process which, you have reported (February 5), are opposed by the government are very relevant in relation to the Department of Transport's plans for major road schemes for the A26 and A27 which threaten the unique South Downs area between Lewes and Polegate, including Fittle Beacon.

The department has invited public comment on options but states that a full environmental assessment will be made only after a firm route has

bishops and diocesan "senior" staff is now required. Meanwhile, a steady stream of able young men and women who are ready to give properly — a title of their incomes — is moving out of the established Church into the "community churches" and other independent assemblies where they see freedom from diocesan bureaucracy on the one hand and from theological liberalism on the other.

Yours faithfully,  
EDWARD UNDERHILL,  
St George's Vicarage,  
327 Durham Road,  
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

## Bending the ears of opera buffs

From Mr Michael Cumberlin

Sir, The Royal Opera House is giving us a splendidly sung and absorbingly staged *Don Giovanni*. The "survivors", alas, have not done so well. Donnas Anna and Elvira hurl a rich range of expletives at their tormentor — scellerato, assassino, barbaro, l'empio, sciagurato, perfido mostro, briccone, felfone, etc., but the best that can be managed in translation is "bastard" for almost everything. An illegitimate procedure, surely?

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL CUMBERLIN,  
116 Haldens,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Hertfordshire,  
February 11.

## From Mrs R. T. Holby

Sir, Nice opera: shame about the subtitles (on television) and surtitles (in the opera house). To nick the words of those classy toffs on stage: "Get lost, you bastard, I've had it!"

Yours faithfully,  
MARY HOLBY,  
4 Hutton Hall,  
Huttons Ambro, York,  
February 11.

## From Mr George C. Cernoch

Sir, All our lives we have had to be content with translations of the Da Ponte text that have come to us from publishers and record companies but now, thanks to the BBC and last night's broadcast from Covent Garden, we are privileged to obtain new insights from a translation into what passes for English by David Stevens.

In the first scene Donna Anna's father, the elderly commendatore, orders the don to release her and engage him instead. Giovanni's reply is: "Va, non mi degno di pugnare teo", hitherto understood to mean: "Go, I will not deign to fight with you". Mr Stevens' elegant version runs: "Get lost, you are not worth fighting".

Maseno's briconaccia is rendered as "you little slut" instead of rascal. Perfidio mostro (perfidious monster) becomes bastard, as do indegno, iniquo and perfido (unworthy, iniquitous, and perfidious one), while Leporello's anguished "O Signor, siam tutti morti" is given as "We've all had it".

Mr Stevens, with a luminous delicacy that never ceases to warm our hearts, has Giovanni saying, "You look terrific Zerlina", and translates Zerlina's "Mi trema un poco il cor" ("My heart trembles a little") as "My heart is thumping". All in all, as an exercise in undisciplined vulgarity it can have few equals.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE C. CERNOCH,  
Chalcut House,  
1 Chalcut Square,  
Regent's Park, NW1,  
February 11.

## From Mr Alan Gibbs

Sir, Watching *Don Giovanni* live from the Royal Opera House last night, I asked myself why this increasingly expensive entertainment could not be broadcast live more regularly. The BBC's patronage would help fund the Opera House's deficit and provide access to opera to the millions of licence holders who are, through taxes, subsidising it but are unable to afford over £100 per night per ticket.

Yours faithfully,  
ALAN GIBBS,  
16 Edwars Square, W8,  
February 11.

## Lords and ladies

From Ms Lesley Abдела

Sir, Professor Lord Beloff's letter (February 5) does indeed show he inhabits that most ivory of ivory towers, the Lords.

There are about 800 hereditary seats in the Upper House, several hundred of these peers attend debates at some time during the year. Except for around 20, from an early and refreshing Scottish tradition, all are kept for the oldest male. Debrett's tell me that at least two boys are waiting to take their seats on reaching their majority. Both have elder sisters.

Nor, as the figures show, has the life peerage system proved any better: for every female life peer created there are seven men.

Yours truly,  
LESLAY ABDELA,  
The Lodge, Conock Manor,  
Nr Devizes, Wiltshire,  
February 8.

## Word imperfect

From Mr Peter du Saouty

Sir, Philip Howard's article (...) and moreover, February 8) about the pronunciation of certain awkward but useful words prompts me to ask about *genre*. It is almost impossible to pronounce it in an English sentence without sounding pedantic or superior — or feeling a bit embarrassed. But it is very useful and there does not seem to be an alternative in English. Or is there?

Yours faithfully,  
PETER DU SAOUTY,  
31 Lee Road,  
Aldeburgh, Suffolk.







## OBITUARIES

## NORMAN READ

Norman Read, American geologist, died in Boston on January 23 aged 101. He was born on January 17, 1891.

A SOLO pilot until well over 90, an oil explorer until the age of 99, Norman Read spent the last years of a lifetime of sometimes hair-raising activity defying the stereotype of old-age. He died in Boston only six days after a joyous 101st birthday party which had been held at the Heathwood Medical Retirement Center in Chestnut Hill. Read was an inveterate skier, flyer and mountaineer throughout his long life. He graduated from Yale with the class of 1913, when he played center for the varsity football team. He then received a master's degree in mining geology from Columbia University. After leaving college he was advised by the president of Kennecott Copper not to prospect in Alaska but to explore Texas for oil - which he continued to do aggressively until only two years ago. He was one of the first Americans to join the Royal Flying Corps in the first world war and was involved in the traumatic crash of a Blériot aircraft resulting in major

back injuries, which did not seem to deter him from the exploits he enjoyed during the rest of his life.

In 1925 he was a member of the expedition which made the first ascent of Mt Logan, at 19,850 feet the highest mountain in Canada. Twenty-five years later he and a distinguished Swiss mountaineer, André Roch, made Logan's second ascent. He skied on every conceivable slope in the Alps, flew to both the North and South Poles and participated in international ski races in both Europe and Chile long before it was the thing to do. As well as flying solo until he was well over 90, he was at 90 presented with the keys of Davos, Switzerland, by the mayor of the city, along with a lifetime pass to all its ski slopes, in recognition of a lifetime of accomplishment in the Alps.

He was a member of, among others, the Essex County Club, Whites of London and the British, French and Swiss Alpine Clubs. He resigned from the Explorers Club, and the American and British Alpine Clubs as soon as women were invited to join. His permanent address for many years was New York's Brook Club.

Andor Foldes, Hungarian-born American pianist and champion of Bartók, died on February 9 aged 78 at his home near Zürich. He was born on December 21, 1913.

THE names of Bartók and Andor Foldes are irrevocably coupled. Foldes met the composer when making his Vienna debut in 1929 and began a friendship which lasted until Bartók's death in 1945. Foldes quickly became a tireless champion of Bartók's piano music, including it in programmes against the composer's advice. As a pianist Foldes had the virtuoso qualities needed to interpret the work of Bartók, who feared for his friend's success in this role.

Hostility was provoked by the inclusion in his recitals of such seemingly incomprehensible music, a poignant reminder of Bartók's then precarious status as a composer, notably in America. Not surprisingly Foldes's complete recording of Bartók's piano music for Deutsche Grammophon was of classic status and had the added advantage of the composer's imprimatur, his blessing and approval.

Like many of his brilliant compatriots, notably Annie Fisher and Geza Anda, Andor Foldes was precociously gifted. He performed Mozart's exceptionally demanding Concerto in B flat, K 450, at the age of eight and later graduated from Dohnányi's celebrated masterclass with distinction in 1932. While at the Budapest Academy he also studied composition with Leo Weiner and conducting with Ernst Ungler.

## ANDOR FOLDES



Foldes first toured Europe in 1933 but, impatient with what he saw as his lack of maturity, withdrew, broadening his outlook with an intense study of languages and philosophy before returning to the concert platform in 1939. His New York debut followed in 1940 but, although he later became an American citizen he made Europe his base and gave a series of widely respected masterclasses in Saarbrücken between 1958 and 1965.

Andor Foldes started his career as a classical specialist and his recitals were

devoted principally to Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. But, as his Bartók suggests, his work became more richly inclusive over the years and his repertoire was extensive. His recording of Samuel Barber's *Excursions* - played with delightful nonchalance - will have been many listeners' introduction to that witty piece of American regionalism and, as a winner of the coveted Liszt Prize in 1933, Foldes played and recorded several works by Hungary's most celebrated composer.

Schumann was another speciality and again showed Foldes's recognisable virtues of clarity, taste and decorum. He was also the author of several books including *Two on a Continent* written with his wife, Lily Kendy, and *Keys to the Keyboard*, a brief and exceptionally practical guide to the pianist's problems. In the latter, Foldes, a charming and genial man, saw the performer's art as that of an exhilarating pioneer, forever scaling one peak in order to conquer another. His recipe for getting the fingers into a "glittery" mood before a concert must have been used by thousands. He warmed up by using Cramer's Study No 40 in B flat major, with its rapid semi-quaver triplets for both hands. Hardly surprisingly, this little gem of a book was translated into many different languages.

*Keys to the Keyboard* was aptly described in an introduction by Sir Malcolm Sargent as showing a "wisdom well expressed and clear in its guidance". Much the same could be said of Andor Foldes the pianist.

## SYD VINCENT

Sydney George Vincent, Lancashire miners' leader, has died aged 70. He was born on May 13, 1921.

SYD Vincent succeeded Joe Gormley as leader of the Lancashire miners and, when Gormley resigned the presidency of the National Union of Mineworkers there were those who believed he might succeed him once again. But a newly-introduced union rule excluding the candidacy of anybody over 55 was successful in ruling out Vincent and allowing Arthur Scargill a comfortable victory. If Vincent had become president, events might have been somewhat different. But in the long run he would have been no more successful than Scargill in arresting the decline of the industry and the palpable impotence of a once-great union. The fact remains, too, that he was no Gormley. They were both moderates, both slow-talking Lancastrians, but Gormley had considerable political skills which he demonstrated at the highest level while Vincent was obviously happier in local negotiations at the pits than in Whitehall or Congress House.

Vincent was born in Leigh, Lancashire, and began work as soon as he was 14. He became first a checkweighman, assessing the weight of coal produced by miners who were paid according to its weight, and then became a pit secretary for the union. He was elected a full-time NUM agent in 1965 and in 1971, when Gormley was elected president of the NUM, his chosen candidate, Vincent, was elected to follow him as Lancashire area secretary. Vincent was therefore on the union's national executive during the three great post-war strikes - in 1972 and 1974, when the miners were able to claim victory against the Heath government, and in 1984-85, from which the NUM emerged split, bitter, and weak.

The last strike was the worst time in Vincent's union life. The majority of his Lancashire miners opposed industrial action. His attempt to force a national ballot, which would have either called off the strike or given it legitimacy, failed disastrously. When the strike began, however, Vincent typically put union loyalty before everything. He backed Scargill and after some of his members went back to the pits he unhesitatingly suspended them. The strike also produced a particularly personal disaster when he was discovered enjoying a holiday with his girl friend in the Tenerife sunshine while his members were facing their worst winter since 1926.

But he was forgiven. He was regarded with affection even by most of his union opponents. His dyed black hair, his splendid voice, renowned for his Sinatra songs



at countless conferences, his outrageously coloured ties, and his natural gregariousness made him noticeably more popular than Gormley. Vincent was also interested particularly in his members' industrial welfare. He represented the NUM on the National Safety and Health Executive.

His wife predeceased him, as did one son, and he is survived by a son and a daughter.

## APPRECIATIONS

## Rear-Admiral John Howson

WHEN Rear-Admiral John Howson (obituary, February 7) retired for the second time in 1971, my wife and I bought his Nottinghamshire home - "The Vinery" at Burton Joyce.

I discovered he was not only a distinguished naval officer but a master brewer and the sale of the house was

completed over several glasses of his own excellent home-brewed beer.

Since that time several generations of rather peppery dachshunds have held dominion over a stout sea-going chest, left over from the Howson days, emphatically black-stencilled "Capt. J. Howson, RN". The next occupant of the box will be named "Jack" as a tribute of our affectionate regard for that fine man.

Barry D. Davies

## Earl St Aldwyn

YOUR obituary of the Earl St Aldwyn rightly referred to his gracious manners. He had early training: over 70 years ago, when he was eight and I

ten, I challenged him to a race down a long corridor at Fairfield Manor; he won and dashed into the nursery at the end, only for his governess to give him a ticking off for entering a room before a lady.

Sibyl Le Marchand

## FEB 15 ON THIS DAY 1939



The Bismarck proved to be perhaps the most formidable battleship of the second world war. She sank HMS Hood on May 24, 1941 and only after a desperate pursuit by ships and aircraft in dreadful weather was she brought to book on May 27 and sunk. At the launching ceremony, not many months before the start of the war, she was named by the grand-daughter of the Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck.

## BISMARCK LAUNCHED

Germany's biggest warship

From Our Special Correspondent

HAMBURG, Feb. 14 In brilliant sunshine - the "Hilder weather" which traditionally favours any important event at which the Führer is present - the first of Germany's 35,000-ton battleships was today named Bismarck, after the creator of the Second Reich, and watched by the makers of the Third Reich, moved down the Blohm and Voss slips to the sea.

Hamburg had prepared a great welcome for Herr Hitler. As the yacht carrying the Führer steamed down the Norder Elbe towards the launching slip shortly before 1 o'clock, the "pocket battleship" Admiral Scheer, the cruiser Nürnberg, and three destroyers fired salutes, while both banks of the river were bright with bunting and cheering crowds. The Führer reached the green launching platform immediately below the high bows of the new battleship, accompanied by Field-Marshal Goring, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, the Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, Dr. Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, and most of the other members of the Government. On the platform itself Herr Hitler was attended by the commanders of the three fighting forces and by Frau von Loewenfeld, the grand-daughter of the Iron Chancellor, who was to name the ship.

In a short speech, Herr Hitler said that the fate of the German Fleet, which was sunk 20 years ago after fighting gloriously for four years, still lay deeply into the heart of every German. National Socialism, therefore, looked upon the resurrection of that Fleet with particular love and sympathy. Limitations, dictated partly by circumstances and partly voluntarily entered upon under the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, accounted for the fact that the names of only a few of the great men of Germany could be borne by the large ships of the Fleet. Of all men who might claim to have prepared the way for the Third Reich, Bismarck stood out in mighty loneliness.

As Führer of the German people and Chancellor of the Reich (continued Herr Hitler), I can give this ship as finer name from our history than the name of that man who, as a true knight without fear and without reproach, was the creator of that German Empire, whose resurrection from the dire misery and whose wonderful enlargement has been granted to us by Providence.

Frau von Loewenfeld then named the ship, breaking a bottle of champagne on the bows as the blocks were knocked away. The Bismarck, however, did not move, and there was an anxious pause of more than three minutes before the bows slowly slid away from the launching platform - in Hamburg it is already a current joke that Field-Marshal Goring was forced to push her before she would move. Herr Hitler watched the ship steadily as she moved down the ways. When she had entered the water he smiled and, with a satisfied shake of the head, brought his clenched fist down on the railing which surrounded the platform.

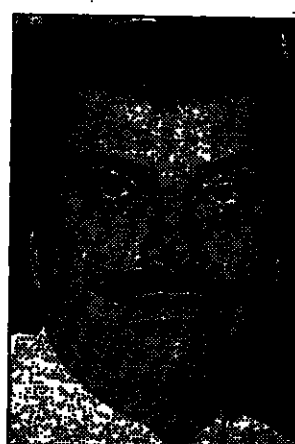
## ARTHUR GIBSON

Arthur Ernest Gibson, aviation photographer, filmmaker and publicist, died on January 29 aged 65. He was born on March 11, 1926.

A PASSIONATE lifelong enthusiasm for flying, combined with an exceptional eye for a picture, made Arthur Gibson one of the world's outstanding air-to-air photographers. He travelled world-wide to photograph all kinds of aircraft from pre-1914 types to Concorde, from crop-sprayers to Mach 2 combat aircraft, from helicopters to jumbo jets. Nobody else captured so vividly the excitement of flying and, if he had one unfulfilled ambition, it was to take photographs on a spaceflight.

To many, he was best known for his 25-year association with the Red Arrows, the RAF aerobatic team, of which he was made the only honorary civilian member in recognition of two superb films and a host of photographs. Yet it was on his abilities as a designer, rather than as a photographer, that he built his commercial success in the advertising world. Twice Gibson added a year or two to his age - first, to get into Willesden School of Art rather than grammar school; secondly to enter the RAFVR in 1944 and become a pilot. He never lost his great loyalty to the service and was a tireless supporter of the RAF Benevolent Fund.

After demobilisation in 1948 he worked as a freelance designer, achieving his first major breakthrough as an exhibition stand designer in the Festival of Britain in 1951. He became design

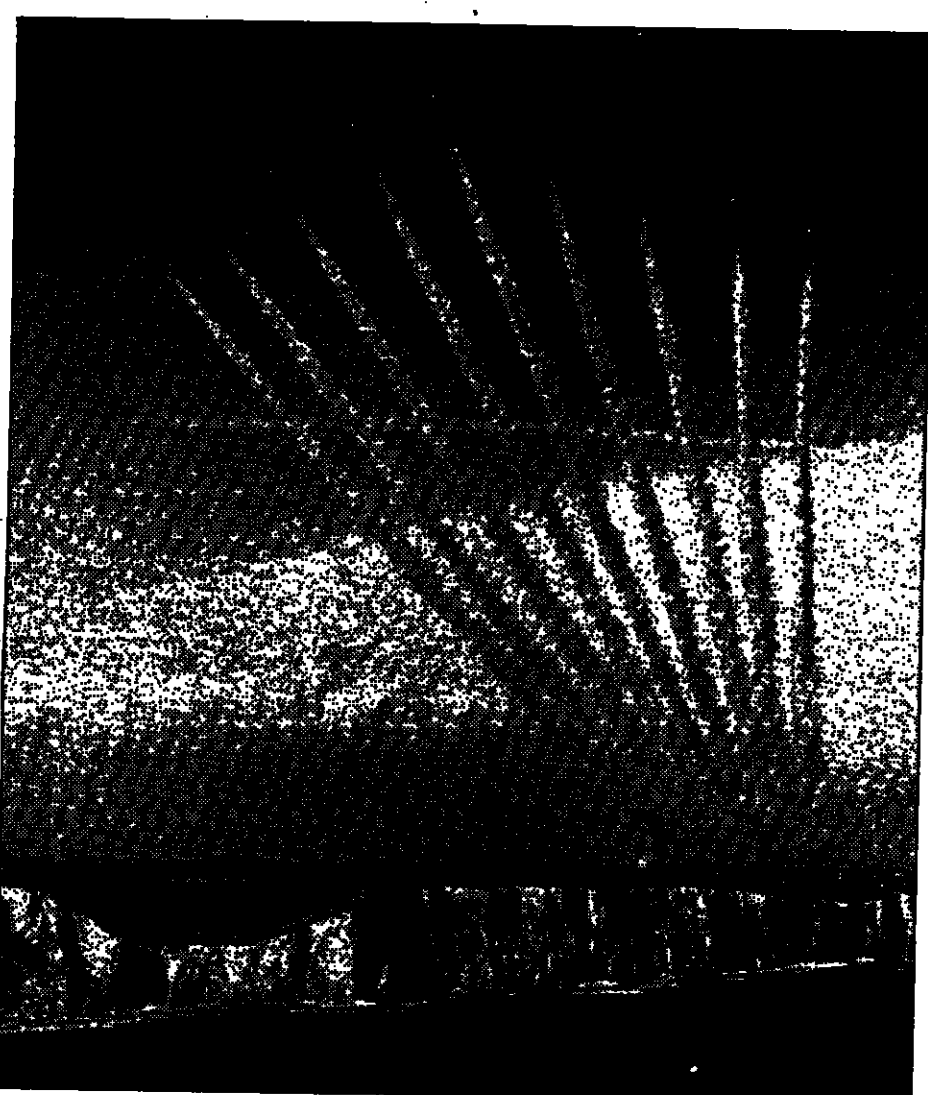


Arthur Gibson and one of his many dramatic photographs of the Red Arrows

consultant to Vickers, the shipping, aircraft and armaments group, and it was inability to obtain the kind of dramatic photographs he wanted that led to his developing his own talents as a photographer. Ironically, his first air-to-air photographs were taken not so much to show off the Viscount turboprop airliner as to demonstrate a new lens developed by another of his clients.

When Vickers became a co-founder of the British Aircraft Corporation in 1960 Gibson was given responsibility for the growing weight of recruitment advertising. This led to his becoming managing director of a new advertising agency, Gibson Gilbert White.

When that became a takeover victim he and some colleagues broke away to form Davis Gibson Advertising, largely with money raised by



mortgaging his home. DGA became responsible for all BAC advertising worldwide. Its work for the corporation and its successor, British Aerospace, for other aerospace clients such as the Society of British Aerospace Companies (the Farnborough Airshow organisers), and for airlines such as British United Airways, British Eagle International, Laker Airways, Gulf Air and North-

west, one of the leading US international carriers, provided the main opportunity and outlet for Gibson's unique skills as a photographer, in which his early pilot training played a key part.

## MARY GOUGH

Mary Gough, naval architect, writer and archaeologist, died in Torbay Hospital on January 18 aged 77. She was born on May 30, 1914.

MARY Gough's full and varied life led her from being one of the first British women to qualify as a naval architect, through driving ambulances and directing the routes of convoys in the North Atlantic during the second world war to an adventurous further career as an archaeologist working in Turkey with her husband, the late Professor Michael Gough. She also wrote a delightful travel book *The Plain and the Rough Places* (1954) in which she set out with characteristic clarity and frankness her experiences exploring southern Turkey in the years immediately following the war.

Born the daughter of Lieutenant D. Ormsby, CBE, (Royal Marines then Admiralty), Mary Gough had a lifelong passion for the sea. She acquired her first boat, a 14 foot sailing dinghy which she refitted

herself, at the age of 14 and, after a varied education in Switzerland and Harpenden, enrolled to study naval architecture at Devonport and Plymouth Technical Colleges. In 1933 she was employed at Gray's Yard, West Hartlepool, designing tramp steamers, some of which are said still to be in service in the eastern Mediterranean.

Despite her success in a male-dominated career structure, she felt frustrated by the bars on advancement operating against women, and by the outbreak of the war had left ship design to drive ambulances in Notting Hill during the Blitz. She was recruited by the Admiralty to top secret work at Bletchley, where she exploited her naval experience and qualifications, helping to plan the routes of convoys crossing the North Atlantic.

In 1946 she married Major Michael Gough (Royal Artillery). In the spring of 1949, after the completion of his interrupted studies, the Goughs set off for Turkey, the first of many journeys to a country which



was to become the main interest of her life. The Goughs were almost penniless and often travelled in conditions of extreme discomfort. Mary claimed a secondary role, announcing that she was a draughtsman not

an archaeologist, but the publication of *The Plain and the Rough Places* in 1954 established her as a writer. Her book is still essential reading for anyone wanting to understand the character of life in southern Anatolia.

For more than 20 years the Goughs carried out research together in Turkey culminating in the excavations at Alahan. Michael's academic career took them to Edinburgh, Ankara and Toronto. Mary continued writing, contributing articles on Turkey to *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Illustrated London News*. She was tireless in trying to improve Anglo-Turkish relations and regularly broadcast for the BBC in English about Turkey, and for the Overseas Service in Turkish about Britain.

After Michael Gough's untimely death in 1974 she completed the study of the important early Christian site of Alahan in the Taurus mountains. Mary Gough ordered and organised the study of the finds from Alahan and edited the final

report, *Alahan, an Early Christian Monastery in Southern Turkey* (1985). Her own vital contribution, which disproved her claims about not being an archaeologist, was self-evidently not acknowledged in the list of contents. She is owed a great debt for bringing into print the major study of a monument which serves as a vital link in understanding the complicated processes of transition from Roman to medieval architecture. The East Church of Alahan was a "domed Basilica" erected by the Emperor Zeno half a century before its much more famous successor, Santa Sophia in Constantinople.

Her last years were spent in her native Devonshire where she was a strong supporter of Kingswear Church. She never lost her enthusiasm for Turkey. Until recently she guided tours of the country and she was on the council of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara when she died.

She is survived by her son, Leo.

## Weekend anniversaries

Today BIRTHS: Philipp Melancthon, theologian, Bretton, Germany, 1497; Galileo Galilei, mathematician and astronomer, Pisa, 1564; Jeremy Bentham, Utilitarian philosopher, London, 1748; Alfred North Whitehead, philosopher, Remesay, 1861; Sir Banister Fletcher, architect and architectural historian, London, 1866; Sir Ernest Shackleton, Antarctic explorer, Kilke, Co. Clare, 1874; H.M. Bateman, cartoonist, Moss Vale, New South Wales, 1887. DEATHS: Jan Swammerdam, entomologist, Amsterdam, 1680; Gonhold Lessing, dramatist,

Braunschweig, Germany, 1781; Henry ("Orator") Hunt, political reformer, Alresford, Hants, 1835; Mikhail Glinka, composer, Berlin, 1857; Nicholas Wiseman, cardinal, first archbishop of Westminster 1850-65, London, 1865; Herbert Henry Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith, prime minister 1908-16, Sutton Courtenay, Berks, 1928; Nat King Cole, singer and pianist, 1965; Hugh Dowding, 1st Baron Dowding, chief of Fighter Command 1936-40, Kent, 1970; Richard Feynman, physicist Nobel laureate 1955, 1988. Singapore surrendered to the Japanese army, 1942.

Tomorrow BIRTHS: Giambattista Bodoni, type designer, Saluzzo, Italy, 1740; Heinrich Barth, explorer in North Africa, Hamburg, 1821; Sir Francis Galton, geneticist, Birmingham, 1822; Ernst Haeckel, biologist, Potsdam, 1834; George Macaulay Trevelyan, historian, Welcombe, Warwickshire, 1876. DEATHS: Richard Meade, physician, London, 1754; Lionel Lukin, pioneer of the lifeboat, Hythe, 1834; Eliza Kane, physician and Arctic explorer, Havana, 1857; Henry Walter Bates, naturalist and explorer in South America, London 1892; Clocue

Carducci, poet, Nobel laureate 1906, Bologna, 1907; Leslie More-Belisha, statesman, the man behind Belisha beacons, Reims, 1957. Chaim Weizmann became the first president of the state of Israel, 1949. Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba, 1959.

## Appointments

Mr David Beattie to be HM Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation. Lord St John of Fawley to be reappointed a member of the Royal Fine Art Commission on the expiry of his present term.

## University news

Durham The following are to receive honorary degrees in July: Doctor of Civil Law: Sir Ron Dearing, public servant in higher education and industry. Doctor of Science: Professor Sir John Cadogan, chemist and writer. Master of Arts: J. Donald Robson, councillor and chairman of Durham County Cricket Club. Honorary degrees will be awarded to the following in December: Doctor of Civil Law: Dr William Gaines, President of the Institute

of European Studies. Master of Science: Fenwick Hutchinson, university woodman. Dendee The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws is to be awarded to: Dr Donald Broadbent, formerly Director of the MRC Applied Psychology Unit, Cambridge University; Mr Roger Gibbs, chairman of Wellcome Trust; Sir Douglas Hardie, chairman of Grampian TV; Professor Rosalyn Higgins, Professor of International Law, LSE; Sir Robert Kilpatrick, President of the General Medical Council; Irene Makowicz, architect.

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● WEEKEND MONEY 21-26  
● SPORT 29-34

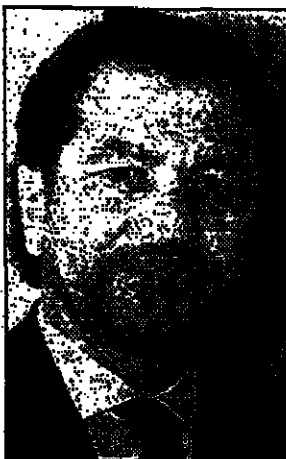
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15 1992

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL

### MONEY

#### Profile

Hero worship among male board members at Amstrad takes the form of designer stubble beards that make them look like Alan Sugar, chairman of the computer technology company. Sugar is now worth between £60 million and £70 million, but before the 1987 crash he was worth almost £600 million. Page 19



#### Buyer beware

Anyone who buys or is left a property could find themselves insuring against the bankruptcy of the former owner. Courts have powers to seize homes to pay off creditors. Page 25

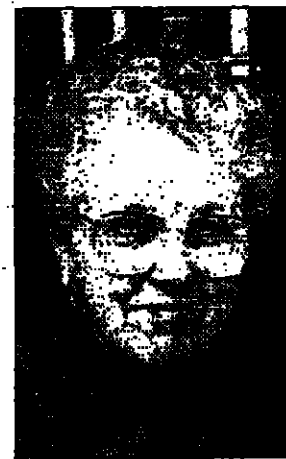
#### Evasive action

Many of last year's 22,632 bankruptcies could have avoided the situation had they opted for an individual voluntary arrangement between debtors and creditors. Page 25



#### Tax battle

Barbara Michaels had a weekly pension in her own right but she and her husband Maurice were taxed as if the pension was being paid to the husband for his wife. The subsequent battle for refund of £682.44 overpaid tax has taken the best part of a year and resulted in an extra accountant's bill of £268. The Revenue has refused to make an ex gratia payment. The Revenue has this week promised improved service in its customers' charter. Page 23



#### Going for broke

Private client stockbrokers are fighting for survival. Many brokers have started charging fees rather than commission while others are offering execution only services. Page 24

#### Under fire

The Investors Compensation Scheme could face renewed investigation of its handling of an investor's claim for compensation if the trade secretary decides to reopen the file. Page 24



#### Due care

Investors in ethical funds need to be vigilant because fund criteria are often vague enough to allow them to invest in companies whose activities some would find distasteful. Page 22

### Production data worse than expected

## Factory output falls to new recession low

By ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN'S economy slid deeper into recession in December, as manufacturing resumed the erratic decline that was briefly interrupted by the false dawns of the spring and early autumn. The worse than expected figures on manufacturing output, published yesterday by the Central Statistical Office, rounded off a week of grim economic news suggesting that the present recession would be the longest in post-war history and that the end was not yet in sight.

However, government ministers took consolation from a fall in the rate of inflation to 4.1 per cent in January from 4.5 per cent the previous month. Some analysts speculated that the past week's combination of good inflation figures and poor output and employment data might prompt a half-point cut in interest rates before the Budget. Others noted, however, that sterling remained pinned to the floor of the European exchange-rate mechanism by the strength of the Spanish peseta. They argued the Chancellor would want to wait until the Budget, when he might have a chance of launching the government's re-election campaign with a full-point cut.

Yesterday's production figures showed that the index of manufacturing output fell 0.3 per cent in December to a new recession low of 110.8. December's manufacturing output was the lowest since February 1988.

However, officials noted that the fall in manufacturing output between November and December was essentially a reversal of the 0.2 per cent rise the previous month. Taking the fourth quarter as a whole, output had shown signs of stability, but this came after the manufacturing sector took another "step downwards in October".

Comparing the average output level in the last three months of the year with three months earlier, the technique used by the CSO to iron out economically insignificant fluctuations, the latest figures showed a decline of 1.2 per cent, equivalent to an annual rate of almost 5 per cent.

Government statisticians said their best estimate of the underlying trend showed manufacturing output falling at an annual rate of about 3 per cent. This decline was the same as the estimate in November, but contrasted with the CSO's assessments in early autumn, when statisticians believed the manufacturing decline had ended.

For 1991 as a whole, manufacturing output showed a decline of 5.3 per cent compared with a year earlier.

Officials noted that the fall in manufacturing during the present recession had been smaller than in the recessions of 1979-81 and 1974-75, although they conceded the decline might not yet be over.

Manufacturing in the last three months was about 8 per cent below the cyclical peak in the second quarter of 1990. The peak to trough fall in the last recession was 15 per cent.

In the engineering sector, which has been worse hit in the past year than chemicals and other manufacturing industries, the peak to trough decline of about 12 per cent in the present recession was "starting to approach" the fall suffered last time.

Yesterday's output figures suggested there would be further bad news for the economy next Thursday when the gross domestic product for the fourth quarter and all of 1991 is due to be published. The index of industrial production, which includes energy and water production, as well as manufacturing, fell 0.1 per cent in the last three months of 1991 compared with the three months before. Excluding North Sea oil and gas production, which rose 2.1 per cent during the quarter, this index, which dominates the changes in the quarterly GDP figures, would show a substantial fall.

Inflation falls, page 1



Handcuffed at Heathrow: businessman Terry Ramsden arriving in London yesterday. He is due to appear at the City of London Magistrates Court today on 22 charges, including fraudulent trading, and making false statements to DTI inspectors

## British Nuclear Fuels to shed 950 workers

By ROSS TIEMAN

BRITISH Nuclear Fuels, a company owned by the energy department, yesterday set the seal on one of Britain's worst weeks for job losses with the announcement that 950 jobs are to go at its head office at Risley, near Manchester. The job losses, which include more than 200 contract

staff, affect nearly half the highly skilled engineers who are responsible for design and construction of British Nuclear's thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield in Cumbria.

At the same time, Glynwed, the engineering group, said it was to shed 200 jobs in Great Bridge, Birmingham. NEI, the power engineering arm of

aeroengine group Rolls-Royce, is also to shed 300 workers in West Bromwich.

And more than 700 jobs are at risk across the country after receivers were called in to ELS, the furniture retailing arm of the Greater Nottingham Co-Operative Society.

The CPSA, the civil service union, claimed that a leaked document showed the De-

partment of Employment was poised to shed 900 staff after a review of supervisory arrangements for Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

Half of the jobs would go at the supervisory headquarters in Sheffield, the union said, and the rest would affect local advisory officers.

The department said it could not trace the document

and a spokeswoman said no decision on staff numbers had yet been made.

Yesterday's announcements bring this week's total of job losses at leading British companies to more than 6,500. These figures have yet to feed through into the unemployment figures, which in January increased by 122,137 to 2,673,864.

## American industry still in decline

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

AMERICAN industry, which last year appeared to be leading the economy out of recession, suffered a 0.9 per cent drop in output in January, according to the latest government figures. The January fall was the third consecutive drop and the biggest one-month fall for a year.

The production figures are likely to dampen hopes that the glint of recovery seen in retail sales data on Thursday heralds a broader-based recovery. The fall in industrial output was spread across all sectors, but the car industry reported the biggest decline, tumbling 8 per cent.

Industrial output last rose in September. It was unchanged in October, but fell 0.3 per cent in November and a further 0.4 per cent in December.

Capacity usage also fell 0.8 per cent in January to 78 per

cent, which was the lowest level since August 1983. However, the weakness of the economy is keeping inflation down. Labour department figures yesterday showed American wholesale prices falling 0.3 per cent last month, the biggest monthly drop for ten months, after a 0.1 per cent decline in December.

The January fall was attributed mainly to lower petrol and heating oil prices. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 0.3 per cent.

The currency markets reacted to yesterday's data by initially marking the dollar sharply lower, to about DM1.6290, before allowing it to bounce back later. The fall in wholesale prices is likely to end any lingering concern that the authorities might have about a resurgence of inflation.

## Surprise as WPP surges

By MARTIN WALLER

SHARES in WPP Group, the advertising company headed by Martin Sorrell, jumped 37p to 95p on the stock market yesterday as a wave of buying out of New York triggered defensive marking-up by British brokers.

The shares later subsided to end 25p ahead at 83p, bringing the rise in the past two days to 35p. Neither the company nor London analysts were able to explain the rise, which came after the equivalent of 2 per cent of the company's share capital was traded in New York on Thursday evening. WPP denied speculation that it was about to sell the Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency.

London analysts speculated that New York investors were buying on the back of a fragile recovery in the American advertising market.

Tempus, page 20

## Mirror pensions to be wound up

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

THE plundered Mirror Group's pension schemes are being wound up. The process is likely to take some years, in the interim pensions will continue to be paid in full to existing and new pensioners.

New schemes are being set up to safeguard employees' contributions. The group has contributed to the old pension schemes and will start making regular payments to the new ones to ensure immediate needs can be met. The board said the moves were the best way of providing security for pensioners, deferred pensioners and employees.

The exact cost to the group of this commitment is not yet known but will make it less attractive to a purchaser. The group is, however, downgrading pension increases under the schemes. These were recently raised to 5 per cent a year and will in future

be 3 per cent a year until circumstances allow changes.

Paul Stannard of Travers Smith Braithwaite, the solicitor of the pension funds' trustees, said: "Obviously the ideal would be for the pension scheme to be put back immediately into a fully funded position. But this is just a pipe dream. The harsh reality is the pension scheme has been plundered and no one is able to fill the hole overnight."

Under the original Mirror pension funds' trust deeds, schemes are bound to pay out pensioners first and then to meet the guaranteed minimum pension entitlements of employees. There are insufficient funds to meet the payments of existing pensions. If enough money were not recovered to pay these guaranteed pensions, Mr Stannard believes the government would foot the bill.

## Clarke to succeed Lord White at Hanson

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH AND PHILIP ROBSON

HANSON yesterday named its successor to Lord White, executive chairman of the group's American operation. He is David Clarke, president of Hanson Industries since 1978.

The announcement was made to leading institutional analysts and shareholders at a presentation presided over by Lord White and Lord Hanson, the chairman. Many Hanson divisional heads were also present. The last time the group had an institutional presentation on this scale was in 1988 and some shareholders saw it as an attempt to limit damage after a year of public scrutiny, not all of it pleasant.

Mr Clarke's appointment, which does

not come into effect until Lord White retires in 1997, came as no surprise. Aged 51, he has been Lord White's right hand man for almost 20 years.

He came on board after Lord White struck his first American deal, buying Seacoast, a fish company. Seacoast was Mr Clarke's family business and he ran it successfully under Hanson's ownership.

Sources close to Hanson in New York said of Mr Clarke and Lord White: "They are very alike. David is financially very astute and they think in the same way. Gordon [Lord White] usually finds the companies and David does the numbers."

Mr Clarke is a member of the New York Yacht Club and last year won the One Ton World Cup and the Queen

Victoria Cup, and was a member of the American Admiral's Cup team.

Naming a successor well ahead of Lord White's retirement is seen as an attempt by Hanson to divert media attention away from Lord White.

Hanson watchers say that, at 68, Lord White looks frail and that publicity over allegations of assault, later dropped, by Victoria Tucker, his 29-year-old girlfriend, have taken their toll on his health.

Lord White might be down but he is not out. He recently gave a relaxed and chatty interview to the *Hull Daily Mail*, his home-town newspaper. In it, he spoke frankly of his views on a number of subjects, including Adolf Hitler's ability to build a decent road system and revitalise a destroyed nation.



Clarke: right hand man

### 81.4% IN TWO YEARS

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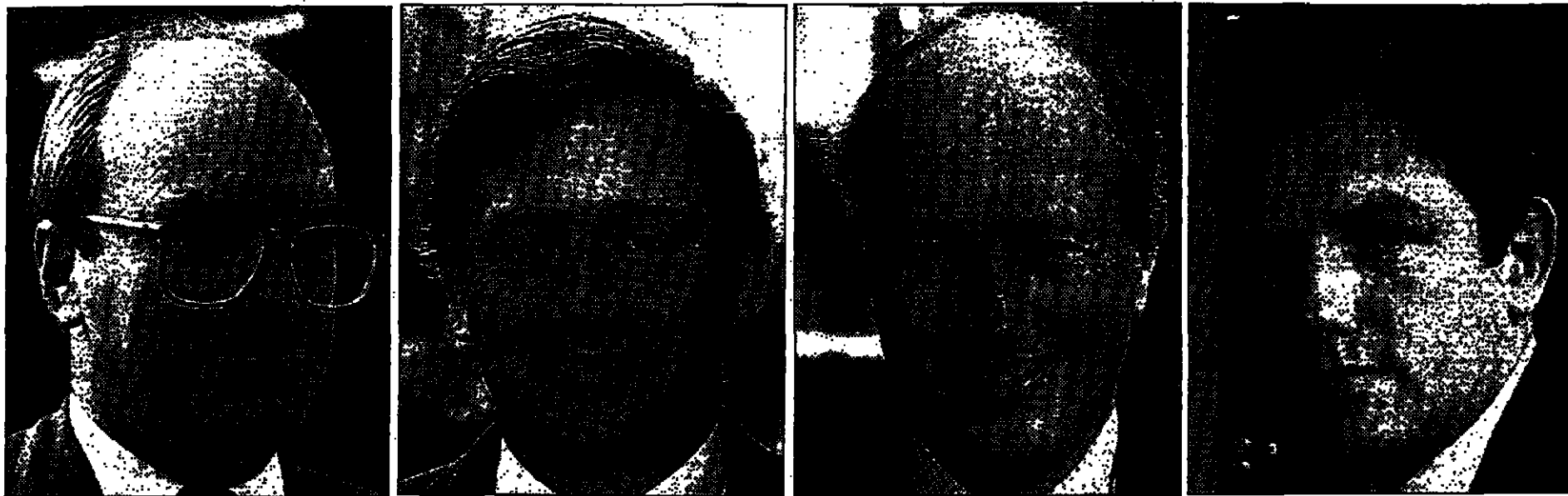
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## THE BLUE ARROW TRIAL

# Flawed superdeal marked passing of an era

The biggest rights issue the City of London had ever seen was to turn into the mother of all hangovers for most of the players involved, Matthew Bond reports



The guilty men: David Reed, County NatWest; Jonathan Cohen, NatWest Investment Bank; Martin Gibbs and Nicholas Wells, Phillips and Drew;

FEW eras can have dated as quickly as that of the late-Eighties. The summer of 1987 was less than five years ago, but it feels more like five decades. Business was booming, big was best, and the City of London was desperate for a slice of the action. Taking part counted for nothing, it was winning that was vital.

No one wanted to win as much as the principal participants in the Blue Arrow affair. Never had the stakes been higher. At £837 million, the rights issue that Blue Arrow launched to pay for the acquisition of Manpower was — and still is — the biggest the City had ever seen.

In the deal-hungry world that the City's merchant banking community had become, it was a rights issue to die for. Get it right and the fees and commissions would run to tens of millions of pounds, and could open the door to even larger and more lucrative deals. Get it wrong, and...

But failure was not to be contemplated. The Brits were back on the world's financial stage, determined to show they could take on anyone and win — whatever the cost.

In the summer of 1987, a leading player on that stage was Tony Berry, whose ascent from modest beginnings to chairman of the Blue Arrow employment agency group, encapsulated everything that Thatcherite Britain stood for. Blue Arrow was one of the decade's great success stories. In just three years, its stock market valuation had soared from £3 million to £450 million. But, having reached the top in Britain, Mr Berry did not want to stop.

Casting his eyes across the Atlantic he found Manpower, the thriving, Milwaukee employment agency group run by Mitchell Fromstein. Mr Berry came, saw and, a brief but spectacular battle later, conquered, agreeing to pay £800 million for Manpower. Blue Arrow had become the biggest employment agency group in the world.

All that was left to sort out

was the minor matter of Britain's biggest ever rights issue. County NatWest was the merchant bank with the Blue Arrow business. Despite its well known high street parent, County was a new kid on the City block and determined to deal its way into the big time. The Blue Arrow rights issue was the big chance and it was not going to go wrong.

But things did not go according to plan. The house of cards that would collapse two months later on Black Monday was already starting to shake. A stock market that had seemed locked in top gear began to falter. Two thirds of a smaller, £214 million rights issue that enabled WPP to buy J Walter Thompson was left with its sub-underwriters. As the closing date for Blue Arrow acceptances neared, interest rates unexpectedly rose, causing further uncertainty in the stock market.

On the evening of September

28, Mr Berry's advisers from County NatWest and Phillips & Drew, Blue Arrow's stockbroker, met at County's Drapers Gardens headquarters to discover how the rights issue had fared.

The extraordinary decisions arrived at that night took just a few hours. But it has taken 12 jurors a year to hear the evidence that led them to the verdict that four of the five defendants were guilty of conspiring to rig the stock market.

At that meeting were four of the five defendants. From County NatWest there was Nicholas Wells, the young merchant banker leading the Blue Arrow rights issue and David Reed, Mr Wells' immediate boss. From UBS Phillips & Drew were two corporate financiers — Martin Gibbs, who headed the finance team, and Christopher Stainforth, also of P&D and the one defendant to be acquitted yesterday.

Earlier in the trial, the

charges against two other individuals, Alan Keat, a partner at Travers Smith Braithwaite, the solicitor, and Stephen Clark, group finance director at County NatWest, were dropped. The cases against County NatWest, NatWest Investment Bank, and UBS Phillips & Drew Securities were also dropped.

The fifth remaining defendant, Jonathan Cohen, then deputy chief executive of NatWest Investment Bank and chief executive of County NatWest, was not at the meeting but according to the prosecution was informed by telephone of the decisions taken that evening and gave his assent. Mr Cohen had denied this but was found guilty by the jury.

By the middle of the evening it was clear that the rights issue had flopped, with only 38 per cent of it taken up by existing shareholders. Blue Arrow was unaffected, because the issue was underwritten, effectively guarantee-

ing the money. Mr Berry could still buy Manpower, although Blue Arrow could be left with a distinctly soggy share price for months, even years, if the unwanted shares passed to the underwriters.

In the City this phenomenon is sometimes referred to as "rights issue hangover". Given the size of the issue, Blue Arrow was heading for the mother of all headaches.

But for County NatWest and UBS Phillips & Drew, whose underwriting and sub-underwriting commitments would cost them close to £170 million, the flop was far more serious. It spelled financial disaster. "Something would have to be done."

Memorably, Mr Berry was dispatched to have supper, while the bankers worked on a way out of the mess. Mr Berry was therefore not a party to the conspiracy that followed.

The alternative to the surplus shares being left with the underwriters and sub-

underwriters was to place the stock with institutions. But, said the P&D men whose sales force would handle such a placing, the institutions would have to be convinced that the rights issue had been comparatively successful and that a prolonged "hangover" was therefore unlikely. To be convincing the take-up would have to be closer to 50 per cent, not 38 per cent.

With time running out, the bankers took the now infamous decision that if a near 50 per cent take-up was what was needed, then a near 50 per cent take-up was what the market would get.

So in the wee small hours of September 28, 1987 — crucially after the official deadline for rights issue acceptances had closed — County NatWest and UBS Phillips & Drew each became the owners of 4 per cent of the issue with Dillon Read, Blue Arrow's American adviser, taking 2 per cent.

By the time P&D's equity

salesmen assembled for the 7.30 am meeting the next day, the rights issue take-up had risen to 48.9 per cent. But even then the subsequent placing did not go smoothly, with County & P&D being forced into taking another 5 million shares each, according to the findings of the Department of Trade and Industry investigation.

But what was 5 million shares between friends. The important thing was that success had been plucked from disaster. Within an hour of the placing's "completion", a press release was issued, giving details of the level of take-up and the subsequent full placing of the remaining shares. It was this press release that the prosecution argued was actively misleading.

A few days later P&D described the placing as "successful" in a full page newspaper advertisement. Once again, the prosecution said, misleading. Later that day Mr Berry was in ebullient, if

prophetic, form. "Today has been a brilliant success, and as a result we have what amounts to a completely new shareholders' register of people who believe in what we are hoping to achieve in the future."

Chief among those new shareholders following the late night meeting, were County NatWest, which owned 13.4 per cent of Blue Arrow. This however was quickly reduced, when a 3.9 per cent stake was placed with UBS, P&D's Swiss parent, its transfer caused by an indemnity against any loss on the Swiss bank holding the stake. P&D already owned almost 5 per cent in its own right.

At a time when the level at which a share stake had to be declared was 5 per cent, it was arranged for County to hold 4.99 per cent on its own account and to place the remaining 4.4 per cent with County NatWest Securities, its market making arm.

Within three weeks the stock market crash had ensured that County and P&D were sitting on huge paper losses on the Blue Arrow shares. Two months later County reported a £69 million loss on its share transactions since the crash, including a £49 million paper loss on its Blue Arrow stake.

But the damage to careers has been just as extensive. Mr Cohen moved to Charterhouse Bank, but later resigned apparently bowing to pressure from the Bank of England. Mr Wells moved to BZW, but like David Reed, who had remained at County, resigned in 1989 after publication of the damning DTI report. Mr Gibbs retired from P&D in 1988 having reached the age of 60 while Mr Stainforth, acquitted yesterday, resigned from P&D after the DTI report.

The four men found guilty yesterday played to win at all costs. Next week they will find out just what those costs are when they return to the court for sentencing.

Convictions, page 1

## Germany lifts VAT to 15% in tax package

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU  
EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

THE upper house of the German parliament has voted in favour of a wide-ranging tax package, under which value-added tax will rise by 1 percentage point to 15 per cent next year.

The agreement brings to an end months of fiscal uncertainty and bitter wrangling between the political parties, but has it also raised fears among economists that the present inflationary pressures and the resulting high rates of interest might be carried well into next year.

There is added concern that the measures will result in an extra financial burden and an increase in the budget deficit.

Other elements of the tax package agreed by the German Bundestag yesterday include a reshuffle in the system of corporate taxation for the benefit mainly of small to medium companies, and a rise in child allowances.

Theo Waigel, the finance minister, pushed his proposal through the Bundestag, after successfully negotiating a last-minute compromise with the state premier of Brandenburg, one of the pivotal SPD states whose backing for the tax package finally carried the Bundestag vote.

The package won 35 votes, the minimum number for an absolute majority, and comes a day after acceptance by the

Bundestag, the lower house, on Thursday. The other SPD-run states voted against the package.

The compromise will cost the German taxpayer DM19.4 billion until 1994 on top of Herr Waigel's original package, under which DM33.6 billion will be added to the German unity fund between 1992 and 1994.

The rise in VAT also comes as a response to pressure from the European Commission: EC finance ministers agreed last year to a minimum European-wide VAT of 15 per cent, as a result of which Germany and Luxembourg were required to raise their rates.

A rise in VAT has always been strongly opposed by the opposition Social Democrats, because of the risks for inflation and the non-progressive nature of indirect taxes.

Alongside the tax package there will be a rise in child benefits and family allowances, as well as tax-free allowances for small and medium companies. A spokeswoman for the finance ministry said that the corporate tax reform was fiscally neutral and the lost revenue from higher allowances would be recouped through the elimination of certain tax deductions. Overall, small-to-medium companies would benefit at the expense of large companies.

Economists have expressed scepticism about the package, however. Helmut Kaiser, head of research at Deutsche Bank, said the rise in VAT "will mean a sudden jump in the retail price index of 0.6 points in January 1993, since one expects that the rise in VAT will translate completely into prices".

This would mean that inflation will not fall under 3.5 per cent in 1993, even on an optimistic scenario, under which the mark remains strong against the dollar and wages rise only moderately this year. Dr Kaiser also cast doubt over the ministry's pledge that the corporate tax reform will turn out to be fiscally neutral.



In line: Tony Edwards has stepped up to become group managing director

## Lucas selects heir apparent

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCAS Industries, one of Britain's largest car parts makers, has selected an aerospace expert who joined the company little more than two years ago as his heir apparent to the chief executive.

Tony Edwards, aged 47, has been appointed group managing director. He joined Lucas in September 1989 from Bombardier, the Canadian train and aircraft maker, as managing director of the aerospace business.

Appointment as group managing director is a traditional device to secure a smooth transition of power within Lucas. Sir Anthony

Gill, the present chairman and chief executive, was group managing director before succeeding Sir Godfrey Messervy as chairman and chief executive in the early Eighties. This time, Lucas is thought to be intending to separate the roles. Sources at the company indicate it is likely to seek an external candidate for the role of non-executive chairman when Sir Anthony retires.

Sir Anthony, aged 61, was scheduled to retire at the end of this year. He has agreed to remain as chairman until the end of 1994. However, he is to stand down as chief executive earlier — possibly at the end of this year.

The appointment reflects satisfaction at Lucas at the way Sir Anthony built up the aerospace business, and with Mr Edwards' success in unifying an international business largely created by acquisition.

Mr Edwards, a production engineer by training, started with Rolls-Royce, the aero-engine maker, in Derby. He spent 14 years at General Electric, the American aero-engine company, becoming president of Canadair Aerospace Group, Bombardier's aircraft manufacturing arm.

While Tsutomu Hata, the finance minister, said one of his ministry's main objectives was to rebuild investor confidence, he rejected calls for a discount rate cut. The central bank last lowered the key rate 0.5 of a percentage point to 4.5 per cent on December 30.

The government, meanwhile, is increasingly paralysed by scandals. The latest involves the former chief of a tracking firm suspected of funneling money to gangsters and politicians.

## Nikkei plunges after arrests

FROM REUTERS IN TOKYO

POLITICAL scandals outweighed expressions of political support for the Tokyo stock market, which greeted plans to revitalise it with another sharp dive.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party approved proposals for higher dividend ratios, lower taxes on stock trading and other measures designed to lure investors back to the market. However, the nearly simultaneous arrest of four businessmen linked to a scandal overshadowed the LDP initiative, pushing the key Nikkei share average down 507.16 points to 20,883.86, its second-lowest close since October 1990.

The Big Four Japanese brokerage houses on Thursday unveiled their proposals to make the market more attractive by raising dividends and relaxing some trading regulations.

Last week, the Osaka Securities Exchange revised rules on futures and options trade to reduce volatility.

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Latest scandal, page 11

## Lancastrian to merge with Northern Rock

THE Northern Rock Building Society has been called upon by the Building Societies Commission to rescue the 12-branch Lancastrian Building Society ahead of the £300 million Lancastrian reporting a loss for 1991. The merger was announced yesterday after the £4.5 billion Northern Rock had put in place a substantial standby facility for the Lancastrian. In 1990 the society had to report a loss and take back £1.5 million from its general reserves after writing off the goodwill purchased with its estate agencies.

The 1991 Lancastrian accounts are "likely to show a small deficit," said Adam Appiegarth, assistant general manager at Northern Rock. The Lancastrian had commercial loans of £25 million and some of these have gone bad.

## Headlam acquisition

HEADLAM Group, a footwear and fabrics company, is buying three domestic floor covering businesses from Hickson International for £5.36 million. It is funding the acquisitions through a £6.1 million share placing and open offer. The businesses form HFD (South), operating profits of which fell from £1.33 million to £917,000 last year on sales down from £25.03 million to £23.22 million. Headlam has promised to pay a final dividend of 1.65p a share, which would make an unchanged total payout of 2.4p.

## Souza Cruz ahead

SOUZA Cruz, BAT Industries' Brazilian subsidiary, reported sharply higher profits for 1991 even though two operating groups returned losses. Net profit was \$4.79 billion cruzeiros (£21.52 million) up from 12.43 billion cruzeiros in 1990, helped by a recovery in financial income and some relaxation of the state-imposed price freeze later in the year. Paper and pulp lost 14.29 billion cruzeiros (\$0.54 billion cruzeiros profit). Fruit juice activities lost 857 million cruzeiros (107 million cruzeiro loss).

## VW sales defy slump

CAR deliveries at Volkswagen rose by 100,000 to 3.13 million last year despite the international downturn in the car market, according to preliminary figures released by VW yesterday. The rise in sales came in response to strong domestic demand, with domestic deliveries rising from 945,000 to 1.25 million. VW international sales fell by 210,000 to 1.88 million, but the company said European market share rose from 16 per cent to 16.4 per cent. VW is Europe's largest carmaker, ahead of Fiat of Italy.

## Steetley bid extended

THE takeover panel has further extended the timetable for the hostile bid for Steetley by Redland, a fellow building materials producer, pending a ruling on whether the offer should go to the monopolies commission. The panel will now reconsider the bid timetable if there is no ruling on a reference from the trade department by March 12, or if the offer is referred, unless Redland is prepared to make undertakings on disposals. Analysts expect the department to decide on Wednesday whether to refer the bid.

## Hoesch fall halted

HOESCH, the German steel and engineering group, expects operating profits of well above DM200 million this year, after DM440 million in 1990. Hoesch said it had halted a decline in earnings in the fourth quarter of 1991, allowing it to report satisfactory results for the full year. The steel division is expected to break even, despite massive price declines in nearly all product groups and production standstills due to construction work. Hoesch made no forecast for 1992 earnings or sales.

### THE SUNDAY TIMES

"We didn't go on a crazy acquisition run like other 1980s entrepreneurs who borrowed to buy companies and got lumbered with the interest charges. Amstrad won't have banks jumping on our backs. We have got cash..."

Alan Sugar in *Business*, The Sunday Times tomorrow



## BUSINESS PROFILE: Alan Sugar

## Street fighter with a nose for survival

Spurs helped the Amstrad chairman bring his thinking back down to earth, as Carol Leonard finds out

Something strange has been happening in the Amstrad boardroom. Several directors have sprouted beards. Not the full, ethnic type, more the designer-stubble type and it makes them look just like Alan Sugar, the company's chairman. In some instances the resemblance is so strong, they could almost be clones.

"I knew you were going to say that," Ann Sugar, Alan's wife of 24 years, says. "There are a lot of beards there, and I'm sure most of them didn't have them when they joined." Mrs Sugar has an air of resignation as she speaks. She is clearly used to people hero-worshipping her husband, be they colleagues or friends.

"Yes, he is surrounded by clones," Stanley Kalms, the chairman of Dixons, who first encountered Sugar ten years ago, says. "They have been very loyal. But they are also a bit like a court in that they will ask him to repeat some funny story, and then laugh louder each time they hear it."

Sugar himself claims to find his fame tiresome. He complains that complete strangers stop him wherever he goes. "You can see them coming from the corner of your eye. He or she has been staring at you all night. No, not plucking up courage, these people are the worst, they are rude, they butt in, they have no common courtesy at all. They say something like 'You know my uncle in Hackney?' I say 'Oh, really.' Yes, he says you know him very well. Then they rattle off a name. I say: 'No, I don't know him, I've never heard of him.' 'Oh, but you do know him,' I don't know him, I'm sorry. 'But you went to school with him, you must know him.' Then I get a bit annoyed. Yes, sometimes I can be rude. I would probably say 'Well, I don't know him so clear off, or words to that effect.' Sugar laughs. He loves to re-act conversations. His wife says he enjoys being in the spotlight, so much so that he ought to be on the stage. But he swears too, readily and is too aggressive ever to

'If it's a do for 2,000 people then it can be binned. If it's for ten, then I had better go. It's a case of whether my absence will be noticed'

have told anybody simply to clear off. "I'm not proud of it but I've got no patience. Ask anybody here about my patience and they will laugh."

Alan Sugar, aged 44, is an extraordinary man. Extraordinary and very ordinary at the same time. Brought up in an east London council house, the youngest of four children, at the age of 12 he was getting up at 6am to boil beetroot for a local greengrocer. By the time he was 16, he was earning more after school and at weekends than his father earned all week.

Mrs Sugar, mother of his three children, all of whom he now employs, met her prospective husband when he was 18. She was two years younger. "He was completely different to anybody else I had ever met," she says. "He wanted to work all the time. He wasn't like an ordinary 18-year-old boy."

Since then, Sugar's career has been well documented. He began by selling car aerials, registered

Alan Michael Sugar Trading as Amstrad when he was 21, floated it on the stock market in 1980 and made a fortune by selling basic, low cost, computer technology to the masses. Amstrad personal computers have become as much a generic term for PCs as Hoovers are for vacuum cleaners. By the time Sugar was 40, he was the

person in Britain, worth almost £600 million. The 1987 stock market crash reduced his value to £197 million — with a record fall of £400 million in one day — and the company's fortunes have never fully recovered. Its shares now trade at about 30p, against an asset value of 53p.

Sugar is philosophical about the change in his so-called worth. He can afford to be. Apart from his Amstrad shares, he is, he says, worth between £60 million and £70 million. "There are two different things which you've got to get clear in your mind. One is what you've actually got in hand — cash and assets — and the other is what people say you're worth, and that fluctuates with the weather. It's basically shares,



Plain talking: Alan Sugar admits to an explosive temper, that he hates wimps and is irreverent

and I have always totally ignored it. It's flustering but you haven't got it and so it's irrelevant."

Sugar has a knack of simplifying everything. He sees the world in terms of black and white. He never allows any room for misunderstanding. Some people call this tunnel vision, say that he is incapable of looking left or right, that he lacks a third dimension.

Kalms says: "He is single-minded and focuses on a problem to the point where he cannot take a lateral view on anything. He has a laser mind, narrow but deep. He is bright, but he has a very unintellectual approach to everything, and that's not meant to be a compliment. He gives very little thought to the grey of life." Others would say that it is this ability to focus on the

matter in hand, without being side-tracked by intellectual debate, which gives Sugar his distinctive, street-wise, business flair.

"He is extremely bright, but he is also very pragmatic," Sam Chisholm, chief executive of BSkyB, says. "He is naturally impressive, amazingly hands-on and if you offer him a deal, no matter what it is, he always wants to debate it. He loves to negotiate, he tests people all the time, he is very shrewd and he has great foresight. He saw satellite television as a business long before most people. He is also unpretentious and anti-bureaucracy. If you ring the switchboard and ask for him, he will usually pick up the phone himself."

Sugar attributes this to the fact that he has always been "very down

to earth." He has, he says, seen people who have let money go to their heads, "and they become different people, they try to force their way into upper circles and I'm just not like that. You never see my picture in *Tatler* magazine because I never go to those sorts of places." Even official invitations from the government are carefully scrutinised. "If it's a do for 2,000 people then it can be binned, but if it's for ten, then I had better go. It's a case of whether my absence will be noticed."

In one breath Sugar talks about his childhood, about being a noisy rather than a shy child — "Not a ruffian, but always plenty of talk" — and about being too poor to buy a bicycle, having to build his own from a secondhand frame. In the

next, he says of his millions: "It's a bit corny, but once you go past the first couple of million it doesn't make any difference. When we went public and someone plunked a cheque in my hand for £2 million, that felt good. I'd done it, I was set for life, but anything beyond that, another two or 20 or 40 or 70 doesn't matter."

Corny or not, Sugar is always brutally honest. He will give a straight answer to a straight question, in his inimitable Cockney way. Ask him about religion and he will say that he is an atheist but Jewish. "That's different, that's a culture, a way of life." Ask him about his mother and he will say that she is "very cold, very cynical and can be very miserable." He is, he says, exactly the same. "We are not a lovey, dovey family." He is aware of his faults but he will not try to correct them. He shrugs his shoulders in lame agreement when they are detailed. That he hates journalists, detests being photographed, that he is irreverent, rude, and excessively aggressive. That he has an explosive temper and swears, that he hates wimps and needs strong people. At the same time, those who work most directly with him clearly adore him, get a buzz from working alongside him, say that he is scrupulously fair, does not hold grudges, and describe his management style as that of a benevolent tyrant. He often installs himself at a vacant desk, on any of the floors in his Brentwood, Essex, headquarters, for a morning or an afternoon. He is visible and hands on. The only thing he disagrees with is his supposed hatred of the City. He admits that he dislikes talking to stock market analysts — "They are very boring" — but says he has no real complaints about the City as such. "Let's be very honest. I've made a lot of money out of the stock market, so how can I ever complain? The 1980s gave anyone the opportunity to succeed. The establishment was smashed, definitely. The old school tie went out the window. Anybody can do anything now."

He was, he says, a Thatcher fan, he did not vote at all until she came to power, he will vote Conservative in the election, but says if it weren't for Neil Kinnock — "That bloke, he's out for lunch, isn't he, they've got to get rid of him" — he might be

tempted to vote Labour because of his working-class roots. He is equally direct about his own mistakes. He is in no sense a maverick or a schemer. "If I could turn the clock back there are lots of things I wouldn't do. Like opening offices throughout the world and diving into product sectors which failed. I'm frustrated by what I know to be correct now."

He has, he says, learnt a lot from his involvement with Tottenham Hotspur. "You get woken up a little bit, you see people spending a whole week resolving a matter worth £40,000. What's peanuts for Amstrad is big for them. It made me realise how big and blasé we had become here. It has brought my thinking back down to earth."

Despite the accusation that he was unimpeachable, thinking is something Sugar often does. On aeroplanes he refuses to talk to fellow passengers — "The poor sod next to me is really in for a bad time" — because he needs peace to think. At home his wife says she can tell instantly from his expression whether to talk or to leave him well alone. "You can see his mind working, he is always thinking of new and different things."

Just as Sugar claims that he is cold, when in reality he is not, he simply finds it difficult to express himself, so he shies away from intellectual discussions, preferring to reach his own conclusions. Kalms would not doubt argue that Sugar's atheism is demonstrative of an unsophisticated brain, unable to grasp the concept of religion. Sugar would argue the reverse, say that he has discussed it at length with the

The 1980s gave anyone the opportunity to succeed. The establishment was smashed. The old school tie went out the window

chief rabbi and would conclude that he is, by nature, a scientist. Scientist one minute, street fighter the next. Sugar is a born survivor. Reports of Amstrad's collapse are, he says, premature. "£300 million in assets is hardly collapsed," he says. "My wife keeps asking what I'm killing myself for, she says no one will thank me. Some people would throw in the towel, say I've got more than enough money to keep me and my family for the rest of my life. The papers would say I was just another shooting star and then I failed. I can't allow that to happen. I suppose it's ego. I might only own 33 per cent, but this company is mine, those are my initials up there, and it's going to be around forever."

## WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

## So what did you do in the recession, Daddy?

THE front door crashes shut, as junior celebrates the end of another day at school. The year may be 2017, but getting out of school is as much fun as ever. In the front room, his father puts down his paper, and shouts a friendly greeting. "And before you rush upstairs come in and tell your mother and I what you learned in school today."

For once the son and heir needs no second invitation. "It was really interesting today. We did late twentieth century history in class, and now I've got to write an essay on it. But the teacher said it was fine to ask you for help, so please, Mum and Dad, what did you do in the recession?"

His parents swap glances and nod in silent accord. "Sit down son. We knew you'd want to know one day and you're probably old enough to be told now. But how much of it you'll be able to put in your essay I'm not sure, as it's still pretty hush, hush. You see your mother and I were on rather special services."

The son's eyes widen, as his father continues. "You see neither of us really fancied conventional recessionary duties. I thought about volunteering to queue in job centres all day, but then there were almost three million doing that already. Hardly what you call select. Then your mother, of course, got a long way down the line with the people who specialised in crying outside houses as the bailiffs went in. But she missed out after 75,000 people volunteered for the work in just one year."

His son interrupts. "So was everyone poor, Dad?" "Oh no son, not everyone. Lawyers, for instance, made pots of money. And accountants fairly coined it, that is until they were forced to pay for all the mistakes they had made. And I remember that being the boss of Burton was always worth a bob or two. Never could understand quite why."

"But what was it that you



low... you name it, we sat on it." Again the younger generation interjects. "But what is fraud and why were there so many trials?" "Well now you're asking son. Your mother and I spent years trying to work that one out. But it all dates back to the late-Eighties and all the money there was splashing around. You must have done them in history by now."

"Actually, we haven't. Dad. Our teacher said historians still can't decide whether the late-Eighties really happened, or whether they were just a mass figment of the imagination. But don't stop, tell me more about your job."

"Well it was long and com-

plicated work. All these defendants each faced hundreds of charges, every one of them involving more money than either of us could ever dream of. At first we used to get terrible headaches, what with concentrating so hard. But after a little while we got the hang of just nodding every now and again to show we were still listening."

"Sometimes we'd get sent out of the court, while the lawyers argued with each other, often for weeks on end. That's when I first got talking to your mother actually, although I'd been trying to catch her eye for the best part of two years."

"Then we'd come back and there'd be one or two fewer in the dock and the judge would tell us that there'd been a bit of a mistake, that so and so had actually been quite a good egg and they'd had to let him go. We'd just nod again and get on with the listening. That was our job."

The boy's mother continues. "Yes listening was what we did best. Oh, and some of those judges had a lovely turn of phrase. I still remember one saying, 'Members of the jury, you have heard how the defendant once came into contact with an aluminium saucepan. He therefore runs a small risk in advanced old age of developing senile dementia. He may be in reasonable health now but I think we ought to bear such a tragic possibility in mind, don't you?' We were all so moved it was all we could do to convict him at all. The chap became a disc-jockey not long afterwards."

"Now calm down darling. We did get some perks. Remember when we were having real trouble reaching a verdict, the judge used to send us away to a lovely country-house hotel. In fact, that's when your mother and I got... well, sort of engaged..."

"That's quite enough smutty talk," says his wife, with a glare. "The boy's going to be a lawyer, not a politician. Upstairs, young man."

## Bond is refused bankruptcy appeal

FROM REUTER IN SYDNEY

ALAN Bond, the Australian entrepreneur, has failed to win leave to appeal against a \$194 million (£82 million) bankruptcy notice, but his lawyer said he was not yet throwing in the towel.

Judge Gerard Brennan, in the High Court, refused Mr Bond special leave to appeal against an earlier ruling that he pay the money to a group of banks led by the Hongkong Bank of Australia, a unit of HSBC Holdings. Mr Bond was ordered to pay costs.

The result of that is that there is no further avenue of appeal in relation to the judgment," Stephen Paterniti, Mr Bond's lawyer, said. But he said Mr Bond would apply to the Federal Court on Tuesday to have the bankruptcy notice, served for the second time in December, set aside as invalid.

"It [yesterday's ruling] takes away one corner of our argument," Mr Paterniti said. The Aus\$194 million was a personal guarantee given by Mr Bond on a Aus\$340 million loan to Dalhousie Investments, his private company, to fund the development of the Greenvale nickel mine in Queensland. Dalhousie was put into liquidation last July with debts of more than Aus\$1 billion.

Last Monday, the Australian Securities Commission, Australia's corporate watchdog, said a two-year investigation into Bond Corporation had identified major breaches of the law that might lead to criminal prosecutions of several former office holders. In September 1990, Mr Bond was forced to resign as chairman of his Bond Corporation empire, worth around Aus\$10 billion at its peak. His former flagship, which struggled for two years to avoid bankruptcy, is now undergoing a debt-for-equity swap scheme with its creditors. The corporation's current debt is around Aus\$2.4 billion.

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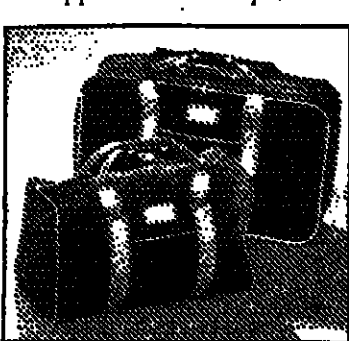
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As the life industry yet again produces bumper sales figures, its regulator is gearing up its investigations and enforcement operation to deal with a growing number of complaints about the activities of some life assurance salesmen.

The sale of single-premium pension policies increased by 35 per cent last year. Much of it was transfers from company schemes.

It is not, therefore, surprising to learn from the Life Assurance and Unit Regulatory Organisation's enforcement bulletin that investors are increasingly questioning advice received to make such moves.

Too often, such moves are financially disastrous for the policyholder, but lucrative for the salesman.

One case that Lauto still has to deal with involves company representatives from the same branch systematically transferring a number of such investors out of a particularly attractive group scheme. Tied agents too often fail to make a sufficiently detailed,

realistic or objective analysis of the relative merits of transferring their prospective investors to a personal pension or leaving them in their occupational scheme, said Lauto. The organisation is concerned that because of the limited understanding of pensions by the general public, the level of complaints received on this subject could understate the scale of the potential problem.

Life companies must check that every factoid accompanying such transfers from occupational pension schemes makes it clear that the sale is right for the client and not the salesman.

Lauto says that some of the sales staff have been inadequately trained, but agrees that others ignore what they know to be the correct advice.

In the meantime, Lauto is to remind life companies, in a future bulletin, that they should check



## COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK  
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

that only people who are likely to benefit are advised to transfer out of occupational pension schemes.

It is no good salesmen using any scare story about specific pension schemes in the news in an attempt to persuade individuals to leave perfectly sound schemes for a personal pension that will almost certainly provide a lower payout.

Lauto will also remind the life companies that they could find it both expensive and embarrassing if they do not carry out proper checks on their salesmen's activities. Companies may have to

pay up to restore the pension rights of investors who have lost out and could also find themselves publicly criticised as a disciplinary measure.

To date, Lauto has not used the publicity weapon in its efforts to protect investors but suggests that it might need to soon.

To make sure that Lauto knows just what is being suggested by salesmen, in sitting rooms and works canteens throughout the country, it is important that those people who refuse to move their pension money tell the regulator about the

inappropriate sales spiel as well as those who are living to rue their pension transfer.

## Due dues

The Inland Revenue can and does make ex gratia payments to people who have suffered because of unpardonable negligence or excruciating delays in dealing with refunds. But despite its new charter, announced with a fanfare this week, it cannot say how much was paid out in this way in the year to last April or the year before that.

It appears that there is no central accounting for mistakes. The figures are not usually collated, said the Revenue, which hopes that it might be able to get the information during the course of the next week. Maybe the 30 million Revenue

customers would have more confidence if they had a right to compensation when mistakes are made. What seems obvious from the Weekend Money mailbag is that tax officials still have a long way to go to meet the targets laid down this week.

Too many letters still go into a Revenue black hole, enabling the collectors to pursue bills which individuals feel they have explained away weeks or months earlier. Everyone makes mistakes. Few are as frightening or as costly as errors made by tax officials. Those who have accountants consult them. Others may have to take time off work to visit tax enquiry centres to find out how a demand was arrived at. Recompense ought to be more readily available.

Last summer, Weekend Money reported on the case of one reader who won a reduction in his tax bill after a catalogue of mistakes. If compensation were promised to cover costs incurred when ordinary Revenue mistakes were made, customers might find they received fewer incorrect demands.

Indemnity insurers press for bigger part in running schemes

## Haggling on detail holds up mortgage rescue plans

BY LINDSAY COOK  
MONEY EDITOR

DIFFERENCES between insurance companies and mortgage lenders still have to be resolved before many of the mortgage rescue schemes announced before Christmas can go ahead. While the insurers support the schemes in principle, they say they do not want to pay for them.

Some insurance companies want to vet each borrower who is to be rescued to make sure that they would have ended up as a repossession case, and are even suggesting they should have the final say on who should get the help.

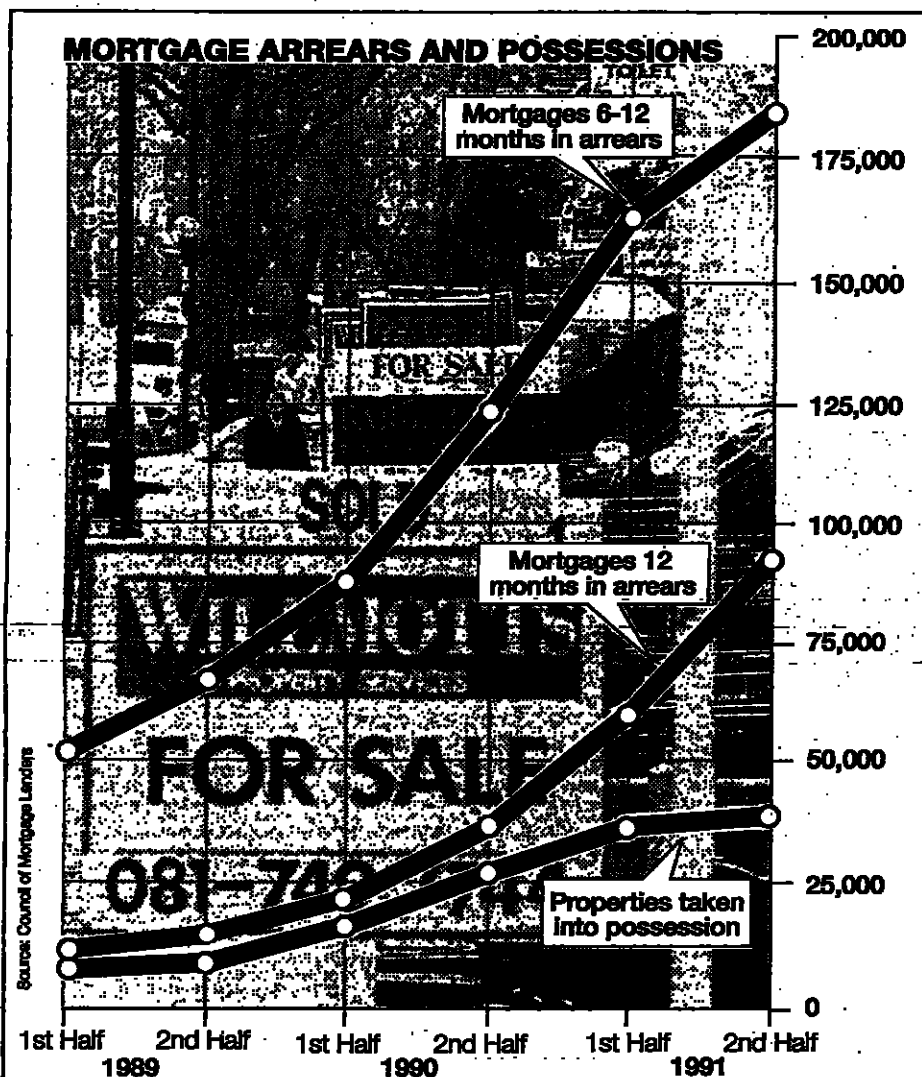
The discussions arise out of the mortgage indemnity policies that the lenders took out. The insurance companies are usually called upon to pay out when borrowers default on their loans and the property is then sold for less than the mortgage, arrears and sale costs. The policy pays the difference.

The policies, however, did not foresee the mortgage rescue schemes and legally need not pay out at all. Because of this, discussions with the insurance companies are delaying the announcement of detailed schemes.

The insurers are worried that they will have to pay out more in claims and more quickly than they would otherwise have done. Repossessions take on average 15 months and then there is a delay while the property is sold before the claim is made on the policy. Under the rescue schemes lenders will make claims earlier and they may be made for people who would not have had their homes repossessed even without the scheme.

Abbey National, which has committed £60 million to a rescue scheme, said: "We are still in a series of talks as to how the insurers can help with our mortgage rescue schemes." The Abbey uses four insurance companies, and plans through its own housing association to buy properties which will then be rented to the original homeowners.

Frank Bartlett, head of lending services at the Woolwich building society, said it could not announce details of its scheme until its "candid



and open" discussions with the insurance companies were completed. He added that insurance companies would pay out less with the rescue schemes because there would be no distress sale of the property and the arrears would not mount up over a long period as they did with repossessions.

He said it was in the interests of both insurance companies and lenders for the schemes to work.

At the Halifax, David Gilchrist, general manager, said the insurance companies were very supportive of its pilot mortgages into rents schemes. These would help a relatively small number of people. He added that the claims on indemnity policies for these homes would be

lower than for repossessions because there was a market valuation instead of a forced sale.

Rod Young, director of personal insurances at Legal & General, lead indemnity insurer for the Woolwich, said: "At the time that agreement in principle was reached with the government a lot of details still had to be sorted out. There is still a lot of detail to be agreed."

He continued that lenders had negotiated with housing associations first of all about the interest rates to be charged, and now were talking to the insurance companies.

In cases where a lender plans to take a share in the rescued property the companies are negotiating for a

share of the potential profits when the property is sold.

Currently, a typical claim is costing an insurance company £13,000 to £15,000. That suggests that last year's 75,000 repossessions will eventually cost the insurance industry about £1 billion.

Next month insurance companies will begin to report their results for last year and these will feature heavy write-offs for mortgage indemnity business. The total cost of the slump in the housing market could be £3 billion to £4 billion.

As a result of these claims the insurance premiums have risen by 50 per cent, and some large indemnity insurers are considering withdrawing from the mortgage indemnity market.

LENDERS confidently expect next month's Budget to include the announcement of another cut in interest rates, and are also hoping for more generous tax relief on mortgage interest, particularly for first-time buyers.

The Abbey National, the second largest lender, is confident enough that there will be good news in the Budget to write to its 1.2 million borrowers telling them that no new mortgage payments will be set until after the Budget on March 10.

A letter being sent to customers this week tells existing borrowers that their rate will change on March 1 following the bank's half-point cut last month. But the letter goes on: "We will send your new payment details and standing order amendment form in March after the Budget has been announced. In this way we can ensure that your new payment takes into account any changes the Chancellor may make in the Budget which may affect your monthly payments."

The bank took everyone by surprise last month when it cut mortgage rates without the normal trigger of a base rate cut.

The Abbey said: "Initiatives to get the market moving have already started, with the suspension of stamp duty and our lead in cutting interest rates. There are definite signs that the government wants to

## Good news on rates expected from Budget

get the market moving and the Budget would seem the ideal opportunity for changes.

The Halifax building society, the largest lender, set its payments for its annual review customers on February 1. Of the society's 1.7 million borrowers, 1.3 million are on annual review. The first payments at the new rate will start on April 1 and will be calculated using the new rate of 10.95 per cent set in January. Any cut in rates in the Budget will not be felt until next year's review unless rates move by more than 3 per cent during the course of the year.

David Gilchrist, the society's general manager, said: "The government will take whatever opportunity it can to bring the rates down. Interest rates at the moment are too high for the state of the economy. We would anticipate a half point cut in the Budget."

There could also be scope for the government to im-

prove tax relief on mortgage payments, particularly for first-time buyers. Mr Gilchrist said. The cost to the government of financing this relief has fallen since last year, when higher rate tax relief on mortgage payments was abolished.

Lower interest rates and lower house prices have also played their part in bringing down the costs. However, mortgage interest relief has become steadily less significant for borrowers.

Mr Gilchrist said: "In the Seventies, Miras [mortgage interest relief at source] reduced monthly payments by about 40 per cent, but now the proportion is only 15 per cent. The cost of raising Miras to £60,000 for first-time buyers would be about a third of the cost of raising it to £40,000 for everyone."

At the moment borrowers can claim tax relief on payments for the first £30,000 of a mortgage.

The Halifax calculates that every £10,000 increase in

mortgage tax relief is equal to knocking half a percentage point off the mortgage rate. Any changes to mortgage interest tax relief in the Budget would have an effect on mortgage payments, but the Halifax would alter payments on mortgages reviewed annually only if the changes were drastic.

A cut in interest rates in this Budget would continue a trend which started in October 1990, when the rate fell from a crippling 15.4 per cent to 14.5 per cent. Another half-point cut would mean a standard variable rate of 10.49 per cent. A borrower with a £40,000 endowment mortgage from the Abbey National would see his or her monthly payment fall by £13.54 from £297.65 to £284.10.

When interest rates were at their highest, a £40,000 endowment loan would have cost £417.08 a month — £120 more than the new mortgage rate.

Rates fell to their lowest point for ten years in June 1988 when the standard rate was 9.8 per cent. They did not stay in single figures for long. By September of the same year, rates had started climbing, and continued to do so until the beginning of 1990. There is no guarantee that the same will not happen again.

SARA MCCONNELL

## Lenders to reward the faithful

LOYALTY is beginning to pay off for homebuyers. This week, Abbey National has written to all its 1.2 million borrowers offering them a mortgage at a fixed rate until May 1999 that will not be offered to the general public through branches (Lindsay Cook writes).

Those people who opt for the rate fixed at 10.9 per cent, an annual percentage rate of 11.7 per cent, will not have to pay the Abbey's £275 administration fee for the remortgage.

About 85 per cent of the society's existing borrowers have loans under £60,000 and from next month will be paying 10.99 per cent on their loans. The decision whether to opt for the certainty of the fixed rate or to stay with a variable rate that could come down further about the time of the Budget will be a difficult one for most borrowers.

The bank will be making other offers in the future to its existing borrowers.

The loyalty mortgages are being offered after a survey was conducted for the former building society. Existing homebuyers were asked if they were going to change lender the next time they moved. Among those who said that they would, cheaper mortgage rates and better terms were the main reason, al-

though 11 per cent said they were dissatisfied with the first lender.

Many feel that new borrowers receive the best deals. The fixed-rate offer and subsequent ones are intended to dispel that feeling. It is cheaper for banks and building societies to keep existing customers than to attract new ones.

The Adams residential property index over the past two years shows that many of the top ten lenders get less than half their existing borrowers back when they move house. In the last quarter of 1991, the Leeds got 36.1 per cent of borrowers back, the Alliance & Leicester 40.6 per cent, the Woolwich 48.1 per cent, Nationwide 49.1 per cent, Abbey 53.3 per cent, and the Halifax 56.6 per cent.

Bristol & West Building Society was one of the first to make a special offer to existing borrowers when it launched its Cascade mortgage in November 1990. This gave borrowers the chance to guarantee that their loan rate would fall by 3 per cent over the next year from the standard rate prevailing at the time of 14.5 per cent. The 7,000 who took the offer had their rates cut to 13.5 per cent in February, 12.5 per cent in May and to 12 per cent in August. The final fall was to 11.5 per cent in November. Now that three months has expired the borrowers

neatly move on to the standard variable rate of 10.99 per cent when that comes down next month.

The Halifax last year introduced a customer loyalty discount of 1 per cent for a year for existing borrowers who take out another loan. This discount is available for those with a good payment record and cannot be added to the Apex discount for larger loans.

National & Provincial has a repeat buyer discount of 1 per cent for a year on loans up to £60,000 and 1.5 per cent for larger loans. In addition, N&P borrowers receive a £150 bonus when they complete.

The Alliance & Leicester smarter mover mortgage gives 1.5 per cent off endowment and pension mortgages and 1 per cent off repayment loans for a year, so long as they are not more than 85 per cent of the valuation. Larger loans have a 2 per cent discount on endowment and pension loans, so long as they are not for more than 80 per cent of the value of the property.

Nationwide gives 0.5 per cent discount for one year. The Woolwich, Leeds and Cheltenham & Gloucester do not give special discounts to existing borrowers returning, although the Woolwich said this was under consideration.

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## Exeter takes the plunge with unit fund in warrants

THE first unit trust to take advantage of new regulations and invest in warrants will be launched next week by Exeter Trust.

Changes to the rules on unit trust investment last summer allowed fund managers to use futures, options and warrants as part of their investment strategy. So far most managers have considered these too risky for private investors. Only Legal & General has so far launched a fund using futures.

Exeter Trust expects to hold at least 60 per cent of its Warrant Fund in warrants, but this could be as much as 80 per cent. Buying a warrant entitles the holder to purchase shares at a fixed price on a specific date or during a specific period, although there is no obligation to buy them. Warrants are traded like shares. Their attraction is that they cost less than the shares themselves, so if the market is going up fund managers can use warrants to acquire more shares cheaply and sell them at a profit.

However, warrants become valueless if they are not exercised by the end of their subscription period. Holders do not have voting rights and do not earn dividends. If stock markets round the world crashed, any warrants held in a fund could lose all their value.

The price movements of ordinary shares are magnified in the price of warrants, which means they fall further than ordinary shares. This could mean that investors lose all that part of the fund invested in warrants if they cash in at the wrong time.

Christopher Whittingslow, Exeter Fund Managers' investment manager, said: "It isn't impossible that people could lose all the proportion of the fund invested in war-

rants. But in practice, it is unlikely. Not all world markets do the same thing at the same time, and we will be investing in the warrants of investment trust shares round the world, which will give us a spread of risk." Investors had to rely on the fund managers to know when to reduce the proportion of the fund held in warrants, he said.

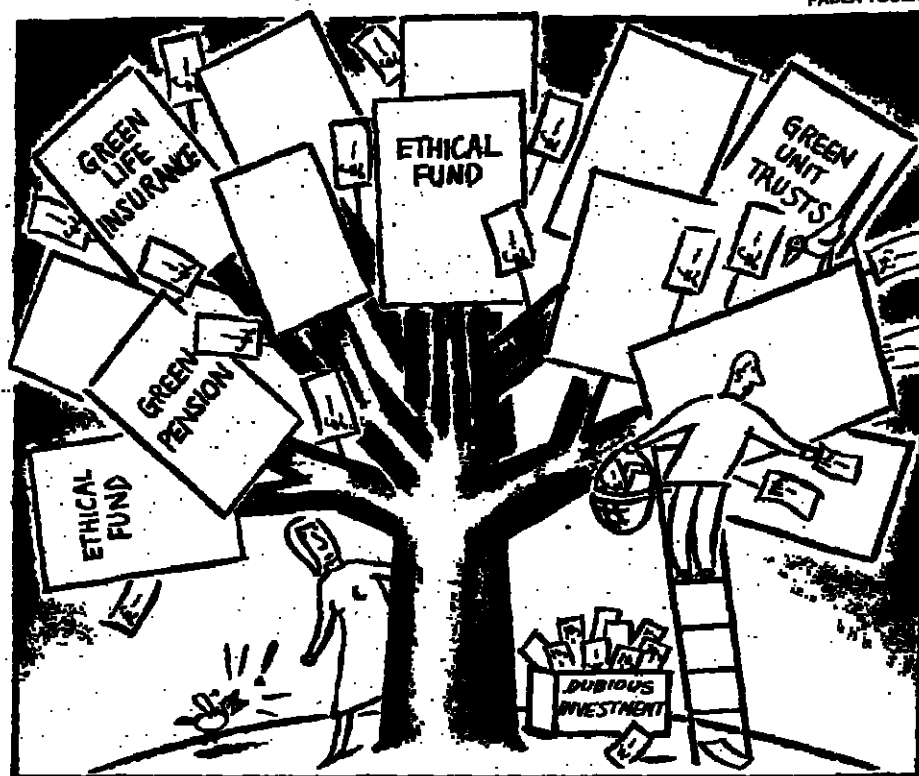
Exeter Fund Managers gives a warning in its literature that "it must be appreciated that all holdings of investment trust warrants could be subject to sudden large falls in their individual prices and therefore in the price of this unit trust. Consequently investors are warned that a shortfall on cancellation or the loss on realisation of the investment at any time after the investor has bought the contract could be very high and could equal the amount invested in warrants."

Unlike geared futures and option funds (GPOFs), warrant funds will not borrow money to buy warrants so the fund should not have a negative value. The fund will also invest between 20 and 40 per cent of its funds in lower risk, zero dividend preference shares of investment trust companies.

These rise by a fixed compound rate every year and have a final predetermined repayment value on the winding-up date of the investment trust. They do not pay an income but will generate one for investors holding income-generating shares within the investment trust.

The unit trust will be available next week. The minimum investment is £1,000 and there will be a 2 per cent discount for those investing before March 20.

SARA MCCONNELL



## Ethical investment demands vigilance

By SARA MCCONNELL

ANOTHER ethical fund was launched this week, complete with literature promising to adhere to strict investment criteria. Like other companies in the sector, Skandia Life says its Ethical Selection Fund will steer clear of companies profiting from sales of alcohol, arms or pornography, those which operate in South Africa or other countries with oppressive regimes, or which damage the environment. It will invest in companies which make a positive contribution to environmental protection, pollution control or which operate equal opportunities policies.

But investors in ethical funds need to be even more vigilant than those in other funds. The criteria set out by

some fund managers are vague enough to allow them to invest in companies whose activities some investors would find distasteful.

Lee Coates, an independent financial adviser whose firm, the Ethical Investors Group, specialises in ethical investments, said: "A lot of companies are fudging the criteria, and the problem is that with the criteria so vague it allows companies to find loopholes."

Pharmaceutical companies which experimented on animals while developing drugs and cosmetics were one area of concern. The fund managers of NM Financial Management's Conscience Fund argue that while they will not invest in companies which use animals to develop cosmetics, the importance of testing drugs which could save human lives overrides ethical concerns.

Some funds also continue to invest in big conglomerates which earn part of their profit from South Africa. The Amity fund run by the Ecclesiastical Group will not invest in companies with "material involvement in South Africa". Mr Coates said: "This is very vague. What does material involvement mean?"

Ecclesiastical said it used several measures, including the number of employees and a company's level of turnover and profits in South Africa. Sue Round, who manages the fund, said: "Everyone has a slightly different view of what is ethical."

Peter Webster, director of EIRIS, the ethical investment research service, said: "There are clearly lots of different ideas of what's ethical and what isn't, but it's very unsafe to think 'I'm ethical and this

is an ethical fund'. Investors need to ask whether companies are putting much effort into research. Investors are most concerned about avoiding investment in companies which harm the environment and those which trade in arms."

Mr Webster said that concerned investors should write to the fund manager. "A lot of funds listen, and people should write in. It will make a difference." Meetings like the one held twice yearly by NM for its Conscience Fund should not be rejected as a gimmick, Mr Webster said.

Investors in unit trusts who find themselves disagreeing with the aims of the fund can cash in their units. Those taking out a long-term contract like a pension or life assurance policy linked to an ethical fund could find it costly to move.

Skandia is aiming to give investors access to a range of funds managed by different companies, partly so that people are not trapped in one fund with their money going to companies they disapprove of. This is particularly important, as the Skandia fund is only offered linked to a life assurance or pension contract, both of which are long-term commitments and expensive to get out of.

The fund will be managed by Jupiter Tyndall Meritt, specialists in ethical investment, and stock selection will be overseen by Mr Coates.

A maximum of 65 per cent of the fund will be invested directly in stocks which meet the ethical criteria. A minimum of 25 per cent will go into ethical unit trusts. The remaining money will be held on deposit, at an ethically acceptable institution.

□ LLOYDS Bank is sending all its 5.3 million customers a booklet explaining what the new banking code of practice will mean for them. The code comes into effect on March 16 and sets minimum standards for banks in dealing with their customers. Lloyds booklet promises to give customers written terms and conditions of services, and to publish a tariff of basic charges. The bank will not respond to other banks' requests for financial references or disclose information outside the Lloyds group. Customers will only have to pay the first £50 of any unauthorised cash withdrawal unless they have been negligent.

□ THE Bradford & Bingley building society has also updated its customer charter, which sets out its duties to its customers. The booklet covers savings accounts, life assurance, pensions, loans and equity investment.

□ TWO fixed rate mortgages are being offered by the Alliance & Leicester and the Britannia building societies. The Alliance & Leicester's loan is fixed at 9.99 per cent (an annual percentage rate of 11.5 per cent) for two years. The loan is offered on endowment or pension-linked loans and there will be an arrangement fee of 0.5 per cent. The Britannia has fixed a rate of 10.3 per cent (APR 11.5 per cent) until December 31 1993. First-time buyers will get a further 1 per cent discount, fixing their rate at 9.3 per cent.

□ SAVERS who want to give money to charity can do so by opening a High 30 Donations account with the Bristol & West building society. Interest paid on the account is half a point lower than on the ordinary High 30 account but this difference will be paid annually to one of four charities. These are the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Shelter, the Home Farm Trust and the Institute of Child Health. Bristol & West will also pay a lump sum to each charity. Savers have to give 30 days' notice for penalty-free access but have one free withdrawal of up to £1,000 every 12 months.

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## Tax refund costs £268



Taxing matters: Barbara and Maurice Michaels with the letters relating to their claim for a refund

### Inland Revenue plans to be the customer's friend

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

LONGER opening hours, quick turnaround times for letters and teach yourself tax videos are all part of the Inland Revenue's customers' charter detailed this week. The department admits that it does not expect to be loved by the 30 million taxpayers, but it hopes that improvements in the service will help the department to become customer-friendly.

Staff have started wearing name badges, identifying themselves on the telephone and signing their own letters. From April, 17 tax enquiry centres will open at 8am and others will continue in business until 5pm to make it easier for those in work to deal with their tax affairs.

The number of people using the centres out of ordinary hours will eventually determine the working day for the 400 enquiry offices. Typically, the offices open from 10am to 4pm. The longer hours experiment will take place in Belfast, Birmingham, Bury St Edmunds, Croydon, East Kilbride, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Newport (Wales), Plymouth, Reading, Romford, Sheffield, Southampton, Southend, Torquay and Watford for 12 months.

The Inland Revenue's mobile enquiry centres that visited 29 places last year will next year visit 70.

For the first time, target turnaround times for replying to customers' letters have been published. From April, tax and collection offices should be able to reply to all

letters within 28 days. In 90 per cent of cases the reply should resolve the query. Other taxpayers should hear within 28 days when the letter will be dealt with. The stamping of documents in connection with buying a house should take place within five working days in 97 per cent of cases.

The Revenue says it recognises the frustration of replies that do not answer the questions posed. It is seeking to ensure that all responses deal fully with all open points.

For customers still frustrated by the responses they receive or the way their tax is dealt with, 34 named customer service managers, one in each of the Inland Revenue's executive offices, will be available to talk to taxpayers.

To make it simpler for both taxpayers and officials not to make mistakes, the department is redesigning the 800 main customer forms. Brochures are also to be colour-coded so that the right one is easier to find. Next year's tax return, which will go to 8 million taxpayers, is among the first to be changed. It will incorporate notes on how to fill in the form.

The departure into videos for the public is an experiment that begins with a teach yourself tax video for small businesses.

Last July, the Inland Revenue promised that its staff were going to be fair, helpful, efficient and accountable as part of the citizen's charter.

Comment, page 21

ONE reader had to write 15 letters and spend more than £268 in accountancy fees to persuade the Inland Revenue to refund overpaid tax. But the Revenue has steadfastly refused to make any ex gratia payment for the extra costs incurred (Lindsay Cook writes).

The Revenue can make such awards under guidelines produced in 1975, but Maurice Michaels of Hove, Sussex, was told that the interest he received on overpaid tax was intended to compensate him for his time, effort and the delay in payment.

The case involves overpayment of tax over three years of £682.44. Although Mr Michaels' wife, Barbara, had sufficient national insurance contributions to earn a pension of £16 to £18 a week, the couple were taxed as if the pension was being paid to the husband for his wife. When the letter claiming back the overpaid tax was submitted to the Revenue in East Kilbride in April by Parnell Kerr Foster, Mr Michaels' accountant, it appeared to be ignored.

The tax office, however, continued to pursue a disputed bill of £213.86 and to ignore a voluntary payment of £442.55 made 18 months earlier. At this stage, the accountant pointed out: "To have to write this letter to draw your attention to errors and to advise our client that the refund made is insufficient has cost our client additional accountancy fees plus VAT when our original calculation sent to you is correct."

In mid-June, the Revenue sent a brief letter stating: "I can inform you, however, I will be reviewing the assessments again shortly." In July, the accountant wrote again, requesting the revised assessment and refund. The reply, a fortnight later, said: "I must apologise for overlooking the statement and that I will ensure all correspondence will be dealt with with priority and care."

Mr Michaels received an accountant's bill in July, for three-and-a-half months. The firm explained that £228.80 plus

VAT was the cost of the additional work caused "by the inspector's disregard of the figures" sent in April. Mr Michaels wrote in August to the chairman of the board of the Revenue, making a formal application for a payment to cover the extra accountancy charges. "Within days he received a holding letter and in October a reply came from the compliance and collection division. This stated that the taxpayers' charter did not provide for reimbursement of accountancy fees. The department said that the overlooking of the £442.55 paid in 1989 and the failure to explain how this had happened were not serious errors. They were "pardonable ones of the kind which happen from time to time despite our best intentions".

The letter continued: "I am afraid I do not consider that what happened here falls within the criteria for serious error under our practice." Still unhappy, Mr Michaels wrote again in November, challenging the decision. It took until January 17 for him to receive a reply, and only then after he sent a reminder. The tax official explained that he had been away for Christmas, before stating that no money would be forthcoming.

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### Portfolio PLATINUM

For readers who may have missed a copy of *The Times* this week, we repeat below the week's *Portfolio* price changes (today's are on page 27).

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	+3	+3	+3	+7	+2		
2	+8	+4	+8	+2	+7		
3	+5	+5	+3	+4	+3		
4	+4	+3	+3	+6	+3		
5	+4	+4	+5	+3	+4		
6	+6	+4	+8	+2	+7		
7	+4	+6	+5	+8	+6		
8	+3	+4	+2	+6	+2		
9	+5	+5	+4	+3	+4		
10	+5	+7	+5	+4	+4		
11	+5	+7	+5	+2	+4		
12	+5	+5	+5	+4	+8		
13	+4	+8	+5	+2	+3		
14	+7	+3	+8	+3	+7		
15	+3	+3	+3	+5	+1		
16	+5	+4	+4	+3	+4		
17	+3	+4	+4	+5	+3		
18	+4	+5	+5	+4	+4		
19	+8	+4	+7	+2	+6		
20	+4	+3	+2	+6	+2		
21	+6	+5	+3	+3	+5		
22	+7	+5	+7	+2	+6		
23	+5	+7	+7	+4	+4		
24	+7	+4	+6	+1	+8		
25	+3	+4	+4	+6	+2		
26	+4	+6	+4	+5	+5		
27	+5	+7	+5	+3	+3		
28	+6	+5	+7	+3	+8		
29	+4	+5	+3	+7	+2		
30	+5	+4	+6	+2	+7		
31	+6	+4	+6	+5	+3		
32	+7	+4	+8	+3	+7		
33	+4	+6	+5	+3	+6		
34	+2	+3	+3	+5	+2		
35	+2	+3	+3	+6	+2		
36	+4	+8	+5	+3	+4		
37	+8	+3	+6	+2	+8		
38	+6	+7	+5	+4	+5		
39	+5	+6	+4	+5	+5		
40	+4	+6	+4	+2	+3		
41	+3	+4	+4	+6	+3		
42	+6	+6	+8	+4	+4		
43	+6	+8	+5	+3	+4		
44	+7	+5	+7	+2	+8		

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Faced with a fight for survival, private client stockbrokers are shedding their fusty image

## Going for broker in a crowded field

BY RUPERT BRUCE

PRIVATE client stockbrokers and building societies used to be as like as chalk and cheese. But now the Abbey National, a former building society, has announced plans to launch a private client stockbroker at the end of 1992, and no one has batted an eyelid.

Abbey National will try to copy the success of the execution-only brokers like the banks and Birmingham-based Sharelink. They simply take an order by telephone or post, and execute it for a low price.

This is one of many challenges to the dwindling band of traditional private client stockbrokers who offer advice and even portfolio management, but at a higher price.

In many cases it is forcing them upmarket, and two distinct types of private client broker have emerged.

David Jones, Sharelink's chief executive, anticipated just such a development when he set up the business in 1987. In five years his workforce has grown to 250 full-time employees, and has expanded to 750 when times are busy.

He has been copied by the likes of Fidelity Share Services, which again offers a low-cost dealing service. Fidelity differs in that it administers clients' portfolios, and will relay stock market information although it does not

offer advice. Meanwhile, the widespread casualties among the traditional private client stockbrokers are well known. They have been assailed by rising costs, falling volumes of business, the crash of 1987, and a series of investment scandals.

Exact figures are hard to come by, but many big London stockbrokers sold their private client lists to provincial firms in the late Eighties, after Big Bang. Many of the pure private client firms shut or merged with others.

Neither of the two chains of private client stockbrokers formed by mergers has been a conspicuous success. The National Investment Group was sold to Capel Cure Myers which is now reported to be up for sale itself. Allied Provincial, while profitable, has faced extensive redundancies and is said to be a hotbed of discontent.

As if all that were not enough, private client stockbrokers now face the cost of converting their back-offices to the Taurus paperless settlement system by April 1993. They will also have to prepare for a new rolling settlement system timetable by early 1994.

Faced with a fight for survival, the bowler-hatted private client broker is beginning to evolve. Many of the most upmarket London brokers, like Cazenove, started charging fees rather than commission some time ago, and their less elitist provincial cousins are following suit.

BWD Rensburg, the northern stockbroker firm, started giving its clients a choice between fees and commission last April. Clients who come to Rensburg for



Ring the changes: Brokers like James Capel are having to update their services

advice or a discretionary portfolio management service now have the option of paying a sliding scale of fees and a flat £25 dealing charge, or the old commission.

Under the Premier Plus Service portfolios are valued, a nominee service is provided, and tax vouchers are prepared. Rensburg expects 5 per cent of its stockbroker income from fees this year and the rest from commission.

Allied Provincial is considering a similar path. A spokesman said: "I think any sort of private client broker is talking about charging in a different way."

Many private client brokers are also developing to provide a complete range of financial services, from drawing up a will, to life insurance, to portfolio management.

Ian Wade is chairman of the private client division at Albert E. Sharp, the Birmingham firm, and also a director of Sharelink, and so is in a position to watch developments on both sides of the private client business.

He said: "I think a split is occurring in the industry. The old stockbroker was half way between execution-only and advisory. People asked about Marks & Spencer and bought some. That type of business was always vulnera-

ble to execution-only type of businesses.

"There have always been brokers like us who have looked to provide a full portfolio service. We are at the other end of the split. The hole is appearing in the middle, which is the rather low value-added execution-only type business."

Quite apart from reshaping their businesses the traditional private client brokers are

also preparing to cast off their fusty exclusive image and market themselves. Their trade association, the Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers, is preparing a marketing campaign.

Michael Baker, chief executive, will emphasise that stockbrokers have to pass an examination while other financial advisers do not. He will also emphasise the openness of stockbroking charges compared with the life insurance industry. He says that while today's 12 million shareholders will decrease in number, those that are left will have even larger portfolios as they are made richer by inheritance. He hopes his members will benefit.

Mr Jones of Sharelink, whose previous vision has made him a rich man, has another prediction. He forecasts that private client stockbroking will polarise into four areas. On the execution-only side there will be businesses like Sharelink and companies like Abbey National which take their share registers and dealing in-house. And on the traditional side there will be advisory stockbrokers, which charge for advice but contract out the dealing, accompanied by a small band of increasingly upmarket firms which do everything.



Charge Transaction

Sharelink (Telephone dealing, Execution-only)	Charge	Transaction
£20,000 - £1 to £1,333	1.5%	£1,333 to £2,500
£2,500 - £2,501 to £5,000	0.75%	£5,001 to £10,000
£10,000 - £25,001+	0.1%	
BWD Rensburg (Advisory)	Charge	Transaction
£30,000 - £1 to £500	1.5%	£501 to £29,000
£29,000 - £29,001 to £40,500	0.5%	£40,501 to £240,500
£240,500 - £240,501+	0.4%	
Allied Provincial (Advisory)	Charge	Transaction
Min £29,500	1.85%	Up to £7,000
	0.5%	£7,001 to £8,000
	0.35%	£8,001 to £26,000
	0.25%	£26,001+
Albert E Sharp (Advisory)	Charge	Transaction
Flat £30 bargain charge	+1.25%	Up to £6,000
	+1.02%	£6,001 to £26,000
	+0.25%	£26,001+

## Compensation scheme comes under fire

BY SARA MCCONNELL

THE Investors Compensation Scheme could face renewed investigation of its handling of an investor's claim for compensation if the trade secretary decides to act on calls this week to reopen the file.

The ICS last week rejected the finding of an independent report by David Donaldson QC, that the scheme had in the first place wrongly rejected a claim by David Wright through maladministration. Mr Wright and his wife Susan had invested a total of £55,000 in bonds and unit trusts through Greenan Investment Management, which collapsed in April 1989, and are claiming £25,000 from the ICS. The Wrights submitted another claim after the first one was rejected and this time the report found no evidence of maladministration. However, the ICS said it believed that "the procedures followed in rejecting

the claim on the first occasion were perfectly proper and in line with scheme rules and procedures".

George Forlives, the Wrights' MP, has now written to Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, calling for a wider investigation into the handling of the claim and protesting at the ICS's "high-handed attitude". He also urged Mr Lilley to consider "whether it is appropriate in the light of this decision, for the members of the ICS board to continue in office".

The ICS said it had written to Mr Wright asking for his comments on the report and would look at any claim for costs sympathetically.

Mr and Mrs Wright had received a cheque for £25,470.64 in November 1989. This was the value of a Crusader bond surrendered on their behalf by James Cunningham, Greenan's managing director, in January 1989. The Wrights also received interest up to April 12, 1989, from ICS. The original invest-

ment in the Crusader bond had been £45,060. They were also paid £11,088.75 compensation for investments in unit trusts. However, the Wrights argued that ICS did not take into account alleged "promises to pay" made by Mr Cunningham when assessing the compensation claim, and are claiming the remaining portion of their investment.

Denis Child, chairman of ICS, said: "There was admittedly an error in the presentation of the earlier case although no evidence was withheld, but it is our opinion that this does not really boil down to maladministration, which is a serious charge." He added: "I'd like to clear this case up. I am not against David Wright. Our priority is to help investors."

The claim was rejected for a second time when the promise to pay claimed by Mr Wright was not considered "clear and unambiguous".

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\*Planned Savings survey of regular annual contribution with-profits personal pension plans June 1991.

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INDEPENDENT



## Bankruptcy the wrong route for many insolvents

By Liz Dolan

MANY of the 22,632 people who were declared bankrupt last year could have avoided the whole humiliating experience if they had been properly advised.

A reader from rural Wales was recently saved, from bankruptcy thanks to the chance discovery of an insolvency consultant. Until then he had believed that bankruptcy was inevitable after the collapse of his one-man business.

An insolvency consultant puts firms and individuals in touch with insolvency practitioners, who may be able to suggest an alternative to bankruptcy. In this case, the practitioner advised opting for an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA), a scheme set up under the 1986 Insolvency Act. It is a legally binding agreement between debtor and creditors, which can be a better solution for both sides, although it is appropriate only when the debtor has a reasonable amount of realisable assets.

Under the arrangement, the debtor offers the creditors the best deal he or she can muster. Steve King, of the Manchester consultant, King & Co., said: "You have to offer something sensible. Fifty per cent of the total owed is average. Thirty per cent would probably be too low."

The offer has to be approved by creditors representing three-quarters of the total value of the debt. Correctly advised, most people can arrive at a mutually beneficial package. Mr King said that nine in ten of the offers made by his clients were accepted, largely because IVA benefits were normally so much better for creditors than if the debtor was declared bankrupt. He calculates that creditors involved in bankruptcy cases get back, on average, only 20 per cent of what they are owed, whereas those with personal voluntary arrangements should regain around 50 per cent.

In the reader's case, the creditors were particularly lucky, because the practitioner discovered he had an annuity that could be cashed in and used to repay all his debts. He said: "I was stunned. I was under the impression I couldn't touch it, but apparently you can in these circumstances."

Once an agreement has been reached, it is ratified in court. Provided the debtor keeps to the terms of the IVA, he is then permanently protected against legal action by individual creditors.

One of the most significant aspects of the reader's case was the level of ignorance shown by his advisers. His accountant, solicitor and bank manager — who, as creditors in their own right, will now benefit from the IVA — had never heard of the system.

According to Steven Hill, technical partner with Cork Gully, the insolvency practitioner, there are still cases where people are declared bankrupt, when they should have chosen the IVA route. He said there was provision in the 1986 Act for people to convert from bankruptcy to an IVA. "But it is not a very popular option, firstly because of the double set of expenses involved and, secondly, because creditors, who have already had to wait a long time for their money, are often unwilling to throw yet more money at the problem."

He calculates that IVAs were used in just one in every eight of last year's 20,000-plus personal insolvency cases. Although ignorance may be partly to blame, he said, the main reason was "the unparalleled ability of the entrepreneur to stay convinced something will turn up when there is no realistic chance of salvation". In other words, people who would have done much better to opt for the IVA solution early on, continue trading until the debts account for much too high a share of realisable assets to make an IVA a viable option.

Mr Hill said that IVAs were not normally suitable for consumer debtors — that is to say, people in trouble with finance houses and other consumer credit institutions — because of the fees. The simplest form of IVA, including a few court appearances and the drafting and distribution to creditors of an IVA proposal, would cost between £500 and £1,000.

Mr King recommends using his type of firm, because of its ability to negotiate lower fees, and select practitioners with experience in the still relatively specialised area of IVAs. However, he charges "perhaps 10 per cent" of the final settlement to creditors. Lists of insolvency practitioners are available from local county court offices, libraries and CABs.

Mr Hill added that bankruptcy had lost much of its stigma, and remained the best option for many people.

## House buyers put at risk

By Owen Dyer

ANY couple thinking of transferring their home from one spouse's name into joint names should think again. It could cost them hundreds or even thousands of pounds when they come to sell.

A little-noticed section of the Insolvency Act 1986 could require them to take out a special insurance policy just to sell their house. In a buyer's market like today's, it could even deter potential purchasers.

Mortgage lenders are insisting that sellers insure against the former owner's bankruptcy before sales can go ahead.

The Act was designed to prevent businessmen threatened with bankruptcy from evading creditors by putting the family home into the wife's name. It gives the court sweeping powers to set aside any gift or any sale for less than the full market value within the previous five years if the person transferring the property later becomes bankrupt. Children who get lifetime gifts of property from their parents may also be caught by the Act. So may former wives who win the family home in a divorce settlement.

The court can exercise its powers even if the property is sold after the transfer but before the bankruptcy to an



Castles defender: Patrick Stevens raised the issue

innocent buyer who paid the full market price. So anyone buying within five years of a gift or transfer at less than market value could risk having their home snatched back to pay a bankrupt former owner's creditors.

Patrick Stevens, a Chwyd solicitor who has raised the issue with the Law Society, said: "No Englishman's home can be his castle if the castle can be snatched back at any time within five years. Imagine the uproar if goods on HP could be taken back if the HP company went bust."

Problems do not arise only on sales. Somebody given property or sold it for less than full value may also have to take out insurance against

1 per cent of the value of the nephew's former share when she arranged to sell the house for £80,000. But the insurers insisted on building in five years' inflation, which raised the premium to £395, or 1.5 per cent.

The insurers, Royal Insurance, required an accountant's report on the nephew's financial circumstances, which added to the cost.

The Law Society is pressing for a change in the law to protect buyers in good faith from the risk of losing their home, although it believes there is little danger that the courts would oust an innocent owner. The government agrees that the risk is minimal and insists that any amendment would have to be introduced by a private member's bill.

A spokesman for the Nationwide Building Society also doubted that the courts would exercise the power, but said the society normally insisted on insurance and admitted that the premiums were "quite high".

Insurers and brokers could not think of a single case where a payout had been made under such a policy. It seems that thousands of homeowners are being effectively compelled to take out expensive insurance against an eventuality that experts agree will probably never materialise.

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**Money talks  
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From Mr Deryck Roberts

Sir, The article by Lindsay Cook (Weekend Money, February 1) was interesting in pointing out the activities of the Halifax Building Society in its timing of the announcement of the new charges on savings accounts of less than £50. Quite rightly, the article states that, by next year, the Halifax will not need to divulge how many people have closed their accounts because of this.

May I add a salutary thought? This ill-thought imposition will have a knock-on effect that, hopefully, will reflect on their trading account for next year.

I, like many other parents, have been encouraging my children to save — no matter how little — with sound, caring organisations, should the day come when one needs to be talking about mortgages and extensions etc.

My two children have now closed their accounts with the Halifax — no big deal as far as the Halifax is concerned — but the knock-on effect is that my wife has also closed her account (well above the £50 limit), in protest. Whilst she was waiting in a long queue, it became obvious that others were of like mind.

Adding to the knock-on effect, my 25-year-old son, who is currently covering my 23-year-old mortgage with the Halifax) matures in two years' time.

No prizes for guessing who will not be handling the investment of this money.

I do not need to attend an AGM to make my voice heard — money talks.

Yours faithfully,  
DERYCK ROBERTS,  
260 Maldon Road,  
Colchester, Essex.

**Wayward interest**

From Mr Gordon Dennis

Sir, I can't compete with Dr Birn's report (February 8) of the Nationwide Building Society taking seven days to clear a cheque; but I have a small, poignant tale.

On January 31, a regular monthly payment left my Oxford bank to travel 14 miles to my wife's building society; it was credited on February 4. During those five days, neither of us received any interest on our money. Where was it? And who was using it?

Yours faithfully,  
GORDON DENNIS,  
Ramble, The Green,  
Standlake, Oxfordshire.

**Lease anomalies**

From Ms Joan South

Sir, Mr Henson was quite correct in the letter (Weekend Money, February 8) that Lindsay Cook's article on the subject of leasehold enfranchisement (February 1) was a timely reminder of the anomalies which have prevented a large number of house leaseholders and particularly those in central London from enfranchising under the provisions of the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act.

Many such leaseholders have been concerned that a number of articles appearing in the press have dwelt on rateable value as the only bogey to be eliminated, whereas we are pleased to see Lindsay Cook's article correctly mentions the other value related condition, namely the notorious two-thirds rule, which the government must abolish, if they do seriously intend to end once and for all the anomalies which the 1967 act created.

The imposition of both rateable value and ground rent qualifications was from the outset always arbitrary. No explanation was given for the inclusion of a rateable value limit in the white paper which preceded the 1967 legislation, nor was there any mention

whatsoever in that white paper of the rental qualification. Landlords have been able to preclude enfranchisement by the simple expedient of manipulating the ground rent charged which they fix at marginally over the two-thirds limit without affecting their ability to secure the highest possible premium on the grant of a long lease. This is the particular situation to which Lindsay Cook is referring in the final sentence of her article, a situation fully borne out in such estates as the Berion, in Hackney, where rateable values are modest (often no more than £300) but where post-1967 act leases have consistently set ground rents at untenable levels.

It is therefore vitally important that the new legislation the government has in mind to amend the 1967 act must remove both value related conditions, particularly in the light of the fact that the intended commonhold legislation provides for no such restrictive qualifications.

Yours faithfully,  
JOAN SOUTH  
(Campaign Co-ordinator,  
Leasehold Enfranchisement  
Association,  
10 Upper Phillimore  
Gardens, W8).

**Tax time warp**

From C.A. Kennett

Sir, It is difficult enough when reaching retirement age to adjust to a reduced income and rely on the state pension, and there is something of a surprise for would-be claimants of personal allowances.

Although I reach the age of 65 on April 3, (that is to say, within the 1991-2 financial year) I do not qualify for the increased age allowance until April 6 1993.

It seems rather incongruous that I have to wait 12

months for the increased allowance when anyone getting married during a financial year can claim an annual proportion for the married man's allowance.

Yours faithfully,  
C.A. KENNETT,  
163 Hillside Road,  
Beeston, Nottinghamshire.

Letters are welcomed, but *The Times* regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns and independent professional advice should be sought.

**Actuarial skill**

From Mr Michael Field

Sir, With reference to Mr Alan Hickman's letter (Weekend Money, February 8) your readers may be interested to learn that a profession exists whose members have precisely the skill required to advise an early leaver from an occupational pension scheme whether or not to accept a transfer value, namely the actuarial profession. Most actuarial pensions consultants

will have both the administrative and computer systems in place to be able to advise in this situation, and the client can be assured of impartial advice as the actuary will charge for the work purely on a "time spent" basis, regardless of the recommendations ultimately given.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL FIELD  
(Consulting Actuary),  
8 St Stephen Street,  
Manchester.

**INTEREST RATES ROUNDUP**

Bank	Fixed rate	Compounded rate	Rate	Term	Notes	Contact
<b>BANKS</b>						
Ordinary Dep A/c	2.50	2.50	2.12	n/a	7 day	
Fixed Term Deposits						
Barclays	7.50	7.50	6.50	25.00-50.00	1 mth	071-626 1587
	7.25	7.25	6.25	25.00-50.00	3 mth	071-626 1587
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	1 mth	Local Branch
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	3 mth	Local Branch
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	6 mth	Local Branch
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	1 mth	0742 828285
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	3 mth	0742 828285
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	6 mth	071-726 1000
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	1 mth	071-726 1000
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	3 mth	071-726 1000
	6.50	6.50	5.50	25.00-50.00	6 mth	071-726 1000

**HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS**

Bank	Rate	Notes	Contact
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Barclays	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none
Prima	6.48	6.50	2,500; none

**BUILDING SOCIETIES**

Bank	Rate	Notes	Contact
Ordinary Share	6.25	6.25	1 mth
Fixed Term Deposits			
Barclays	7.50	7.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	7.25	7.25	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00

**NATIONAL SAVINGS**

Bank	Rate	Notes	Contact
Ordinary A/c	5.00	5.75	5-10,000
Fixed Term Deposits			
Barclays	7.50	7.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	7.25	7.25	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00

**GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS**

Bank	Rate	Notes	Contact
Fixed Term Deposits			
Barclays	7.50	7.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	7.25	7.25	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00
Barclays	6.50	6.50	25.00-50.00

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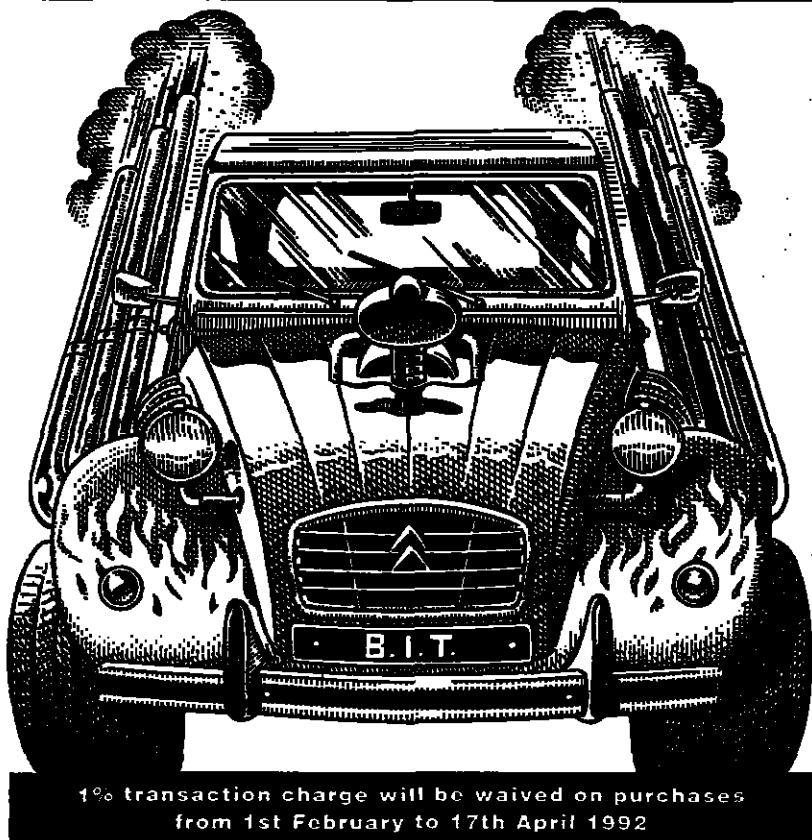
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THE TIMES SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15 1992

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Scotland may be hit by backlash

# Ireland fuel their fire with desire to regain esteem

By Bryan Stiles

A FAINT whiff of optimism has been wafting around the bars of Dublin this week. It is an optimism peculiar to the Irish and has been gathering strength despite the embarrassing defeats that devastated Ireland in their last two games.

The feeling is that the Scots are going to endure the backlash for those losses when they step out on to Lansdowne Road for their five nations' championship match this afternoon.

The optimism is driven by the passion of the loyal supporter who freely criticises his team for weaknesses, real and imagined, yet still regards the next game as the one in which his favourites are going to reveal their true worth.

Irish confidence is lifted by the fact that Scotland are their opponents — after all, reason the Irish, Scotland are in a far worse mess than they are. The Scots have not recovered from the retirement of Calder and Jeffrey, or the injury to Armstrong, goes the reasoning. And the game is at Lansdowne Road, the vibrant venue for the most thrilling match in the World Cup last autumn, when Ireland were almost roared to a famous victory over Australia, the

eventual champions. Support like that is worth half a dozen points on the board and that could be decisive.

A little more iron has entered the souls of the Irish players in recent weeks, too, following criticism of their captain, Philip Matthews, and their coach, Ciaran Fitzgerald, by Mick Doyle, a former international and coach, in a newspaper column.

Doyle was scathing over the defeats by Wales and England. Happily for the Irish, it has had the effect of binding the team closer together.

Two Irishmen likely to have influential roles this afternoon are Neil Francis and Brendan Mullin. Francis is regarded by many as the best lineout jumper in Europe. He showed the much-vaunted England pairing of Dooley and Bayfield how the job should be done during England's 38-9 victory at Twickenham a fortnight ago.

If the ball he secures can be moved swiftly to the backs, then Mullin is likely to enjoy another productive game against the Scots. He has scored four tries in recent games against them and, as the leading Irish try-scorer, with 15 to his credit, he is looking forward to having

Danaher alongside him in the centre.

Danaher was the only change from the team that played England until Murphy was called in for the injured Staples at full back. Danaher's aggression is likely to create openings for Mullin, who makes his 45th international appearance.

Mullin and his former partner, Kiernan, made a world record of 23 appearances together for a centre partnership and that will be broken today by the Scottish centres, Scott Hastings and Lineen, who will be quick to exploit weaknesses in understanding by the new pairing.

Scotland have kept faith with the team defeated 25-7 by England at Murrayfield, which means Iwan Tukalo equals the Scottish record of 33 caps for a wing, held by Arthur Smith.

The Scots feel they have the measure of the Irish — they have beaten them in their last four meetings — and they will be looking again to Gavin Hastings to make a telling contribution with his goal-kicking and his powerful forays into the back line. He will need to keep a steady nerve in front of those fervent Irish supporters.

## DISPOSABLE

□ Scotland's victory in the World Cup pool match in October was their 53rd in the 115-year-old series. Ireland have won 45 and four have been drawn, with one abandoned.

□ Ireland's biggest winning margin was in the 21-0 victory in 1950. Scotland's came in their grand slam year of 1984, when they won 32-9; both matches were in Dublin.

□ Iwan Tukalo equals the Scottish record of 33 caps for a wing, held by Arthur Smith (1955-62). Tukalo has scored 15 tries in his international career.

□ The 1989 game produced the record aggregate for the series of 58 points, to be followed by 53 points last season. Both games were refereed by Kerry Fitzgerald, the Australian official who died in December.

□ International results over the last ten years (five nations' championship unless stated): 1982: Ireland 21, Scotland 12; 1983: Scotland 13, Ireland 15; 1984: Ireland 9, Scotland 32; 1985: Scotland 15, Ireland 18; 1986: Ireland 9, Scotland 13; 1987: Scotland 16, Ireland 12; 1988: Ireland 22, Scotland 18; 1989: Scotland 37, Ireland 21; 1990: Ireland 10, Scotland 13; 1991: Scotland 26, Ireland 26; 1992: Ireland 15 (World Cup, pool round).

Ireland	15	Full Back	Scotland	15
K J Murphy (Cork Constitution)			A G Hastings (Widzew)	
R M Wallace (Garryowen)	14	Right wing	A G Stanger (Newick)	14
B J Mullin (Blackrock College)	13	Right centre	S Hastings (Widzew)	13
P P A Danaher (Garryowen)	12	Left centre	S R P Lineen (Garryowen)	12
S P Gough (Garryowen)	11	Left wing	I Tukalo (Blackrock)	11
R P Keyes (Cork Constitution)	10	Stand off	C M Chalmers (Metron)	10
L F P Aherne (Lansdowne)	9	Scrum half	A D Nichol (Dundee HSP)	9
N J Poppell (Garryowen)	1	Prop	D M B Sole (Edinburgh Academics)	1
S J Smith (Garryowen)	2	Hooker	K S Milne (Garryowen)	2
G F Halpin (Lansdowne)	3	Prop	A P Burnell (London Scottish)	3
P M Matthews (Wanderers)	6	Flanker	D J McIvor (Edinburgh Academics)	6
M J Gahvey (Shannon)	4	Lock	N G B Edwards (Hawick)	4
N P J Francis (Blackrock College)	5	Lock	G W Weir (Metron)	5
M J J Fitzgibbon (Shannon)	7	Flanker	I R Smith (Garryowen)	7
B F Robinson (Garryowen)	8	No 8	D B White (London Scottish)	8

REPLACEMENTS: 16 D M Currie (London Irish); 17 D R McAleese (Garryowen); 18 R Sweeney (London Irish); 19 B Lender (Bective Rangers); 20 D C Fitzgerald (DUSP); 21 T J Kingston (Dolphin).

Ireland	15	Full Back	Scotland	15
K J Murphy (Cork Constitution)			A G Hastings (Widzew)	
R M Wallace (Garryowen)	14	Right wing	A G Stanger (Newick)	14
B J Mullin (Blackrock College)	13	Right centre	S Hastings (Widzew)	13
P P A Danaher (Garryowen)	12	Left centre	S R P Lineen (Garryowen)	12
S P Gough (Garryowen)	11	Left wing	I Tukalo (Blackrock)	11
R P Keyes (Cork Constitution)	10	Stand off	C M Chalmers (Metron)	10
L F P Aherne (Lansdowne)	9	Scrum half	A D Nichol (Dundee HSP)	9
N J Poppell (Garryowen)	1	Prop	D M B Sole (Edinburgh Academics)	1
S J Smith (Garryowen)	2	Hooker	K S Milne (Garryowen)	2
G F Halpin (Lansdowne)	3	Prop	A P Burnell (London Scottish)	3
P M Matthews (Wanderers)	6	Flanker	D J McIvor (Edinburgh Academics)	6
M J Gahvey (Shannon)	4	Lock	N G B Edwards (Hawick)	4
N P J Francis (Blackrock College)	5	Lock	G W Weir (Metron)	5
M J J Fitzgibbon (Shannon)	7	Flanker	I R Smith (Garryowen)	7
B F Robinson (Garryowen)	8	No 8	D B White (London Scottish)	8

REPLACEMENTS: 16 P W Dods (Gaelic); 17 A Shiel (Metron); 18 G H O'Hara (Newick); 19 P J Wetherill (Edinburgh Academics); 20 P J Jones (Garryowen); 21 J Allan (Edinburgh Academics).

## New Zealand tour is the carrot for B men

By David Hands

ENGLAND encounter by far their most substantial opposition in their third B international of the season, at the Jean Bouin Stadium today. Those players who do well here may justifiably build their hopes of a tour to New Zealand in June.

In two matches, against Spain and Ireland, they have scored 81 points, thanks, in large part, to the tactical decision-making of Stuart Barnes, their captain. But the size of today's task is illustrated by the presence in the opposing ranks of such notable senior caps as Bonnevill, Bourgoin and Benetton.

That Bonnevill, who has 18 caps, is now in a third-choice XV gives an idea of the depth of French rugby. Their newly-conceived Espoirs play the

FIRA match with Italy in Tarbes tomorrow so their forces are split but Bonneval and, particularly, the elusive Blanc should challenge England's effective midfield.

Like their seniors in the Parc des Princes across the way, England's B team will want a better return from their tight forwards.

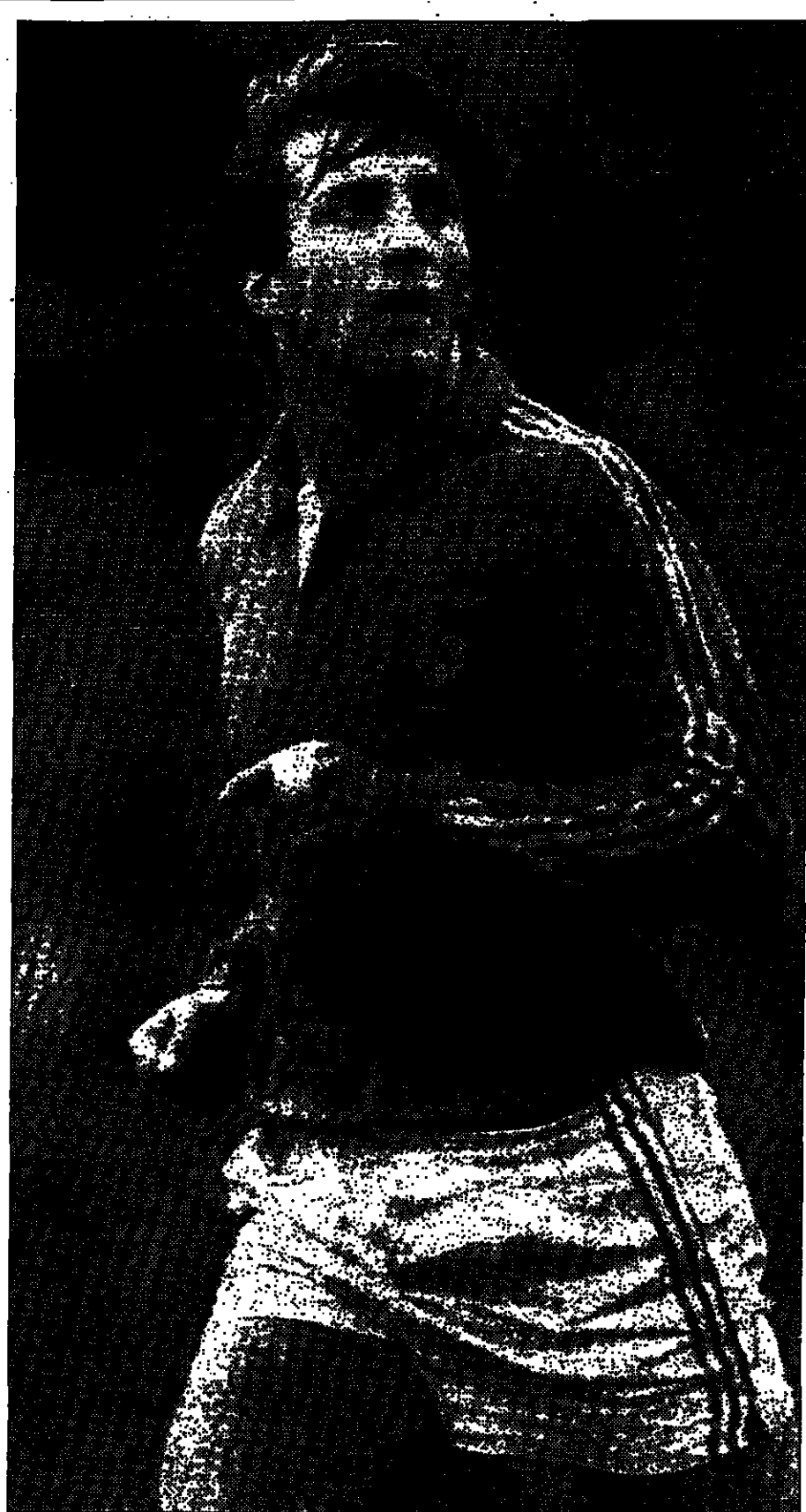
FRANCE B: J C Langade (Nimes); S White (Grenoble); B Bonneval (Toulouse); E Blanc (Fleury Lesob); D Berry (Toulouse); F Vial (Grenoble); G Agostini (Grenoble); P Dore (Grenoble); F Lander (Angoulême); E Michaud (SBUC); B Delle Riva (Toulouse); G Bourgoin (Narbonne); J P Ravet (Grenoble); P Benetton (Agen); N Hallinger (Metron); J ANDRE B I Hunter (Northampton); J Buckton (Gaelic); G Barnes (Gaelic); B Bette (Wasps); G Baldwin (Northampton); G Davis (Bath); A Mullins (Preston); M Greenwood (Northampton); M Johnson (Leicester); D Sims (Glasgow); J Caneill (Glasgow); R McDonald (Preston).

## Australia will play against South Africa

Sydney: Australia hope to become the first country to play South Africa in international rugby union following the lifting of a boycott of contact between the two countries.

Joe French, president and chairman of the Australian Rugby Football Union, said South Africa would be approached at a meeting of rugby officials here today.

"The South African delegation will be approached to issue an invitation to the Wallabies to tour South Africa sometime in August this year," French said. That encounter would mark the return of the Springboks to international competition, pre-empting a tour of France in October.



Leading by example: Sella, France's guiding star and inspiration in Paris today

## Sella's talent makes him France's natural leader

David Hands analyses the qualities of a player who is held in awe by his country's sports followers

Six years ago you could come to Paris and see the billboards on an international-match weekend. *Sella, le sacre monstre*. Philippe Sella, a monster? Well, not exactly. It was merely the way the French chose to define a player whose skills and strength put him above so many of his contemporaries.

Sella is still a monster, but now he is Captain Monstre, of the French team which today attempts to end England's apparently inexorable drive towards a second successive five nations' championship. It took him 80 caps before he was invited to lead his country, against Wales on February 1, which probably says something about the man as well as the history of French leadership.

When in doubt, the French turn automatically to their scrum half as captain; already Fabien Galthie is spoken of as next in line, despite his inexperience. There is no pack leader in the present side. Galthie will act as the forwards' eyes, aided by the two decision-makers alongside, Alain Penaud, the other half back, and Sella.

There is an instructive comparison to be drawn between Sella and another centre who came to international leadership late, Paul Dodge. The circumstances of Dodge's elevation were not dissimilar in 1985. England were rebuilding, on the same mas-

sive scale as France this season, and Dodge, though by no means a natural leader, was the only player with the experience and consistency who could be called upon. Similarly, there is a uniform acceptance of Sella, not the most boisterous of men, as the hub of the French team. Pierre Berbizier, the coach who appointed him (even though they have had the odd disagreement), declares him to be a natural leader and an obvious selection. "He leads by example." That, indeed, is the key to the player. He can do it all, in doing so, encourages others to follow. He once reflected that he could end up as a flank forward, a job he is strong and hard enough to do and which, indeed, he can be seen frequently doing even now.

He stands alone in this team. There are others with many caps — Franck Mesnel, Jean-Baptiste Lafond, Marc Cécillon — but not one has reached the commanding heights that Sella has occupied now for seven years, after an international apprenticeship that began with his first cap in 1982, against Romania. So does the new team

fit him? "It's a different content," he says. "When I arrived I was a shy young boy. Now, I can go back ten years and identify with the young men coming into the team, although there is a difference because the youngsters today have more personality than we did."

Sella has the slightly aesthetic look of the artist, looks belied by the power he generates in the tackle and with the ball in hand. When Berbizier offered him the captaincy, the two men sat down to convince each other of the way forward. Both derived satisfaction from the slim 12-9 victory over Wales because they could identify moments when work done in training came to fruition.

"But as soon as we forgot some of the basic rules of rugby, the Welsh knew how to expose our weaknesses," Sella said. "Even so it is not my part to try and make up for the defects of others. The aim is to encourage them, the young men, to express themselves. This is a more disciplined team than that which played in the World Cup last October — it listens and it learns." How deeply the lessons are ingrained England will learn today.

## RUGBY LEAGUE

## Under-strength sides have much to prove

FROM KEITH MACKLIN IN PERPIGNAN

THE most striking feature about the France v Great Britain British Coal International here tomorrow is the composition of the two sides. Great Britain have a strange look without their normal huge representation from the champions and Challenge Cup holders. Wigan, who play Warrington in a delayed Silk Cut Challenge Cup tie.

The French have been hit by the withdrawal, for a variety of "personal reasons" of seasoned internationals in Guy Delaunay, Thierry Buttignol, Daniel Verdes, Jacques Moliner and Marc Palanques, and are still endeavouring to rebuild their side on the foundation of the experienced and skilful half backs, Gilles Dumar and Patric Entat.

As a result, both teams pitch into the fray players anxious to make their mark on the international scene. The stakes are high for the Great Britain team, with the coach, Malcolm Reilly, pondering on his final choices for the important tour of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea this summer.

For France the challenge is to produce a team capable of competing at international level with Australia and Great Britain, who each thrashed France by 60 points in a disastrous 1990-1 season

that plunged rugby league across the Channel into yet another of its periodic bouts of crisis and gloom.

Tomorrow's game will thus be fiercely fought, and the result is expected to be much closer than in last year's games, won by Great Britain with ludicrous ease, 45-10 at Perpignan and a record 60-4 at Headingley.

Two men in the British side will be particularly anxious to make impressions on Reilly. Jonathan Davies, captain in the absence of Hanley, Edwards and Schofield, wants a regular international place. Lee Crooks, a self-confessed reformed character, with drink and weight problems behind him, wants to reclaim the regular place in the forwards he lost three years ago.

FRANCE: P Limongi (Caennaise), C Servat (St Gaudens), P Chastagnol (St Gaudens), P Jace (Fleury Lesob), G Dumas (St Gaudens), cap, P Entat (Caennaise), J Vignoli (Caennaise), T Valero (Lézignan), S Long (Caennaise), G Bonneton (Aix), G Delpech (Villeneuve), J Pech (Lézignan), S Substans (St Gaudens), P Torralba (St Gaudens), P Bonnet (St Gaudens).

GREAT BRITAIN: A Tait (Widzew), J Dumas (Widzew), G Connolly (St Gaudens), J Davies (Widzew), J Bentley (Leeds), J Griffiths (St Gaudens), R Goulding (Leeds), L Crooks (Leeds), L Jackson (Leeds), P Olson (Leeds), R Parkin (Blackburn), M Jackson (Widzew), T Kelly (Widzew), M Jackson (Widzew), D Powell (Sheffield Eagles), M Jones (Leeds), G Statham (Leeds), R Byrne (Widzew).

Referee: E Ward (Australia).

□ Wigan play Warrington in the Silk Cut Cup at Central Park tomorrow.

## SWIMMING

## Sprinting trio are split by a fraction

By Craig Lord

THE three big men of British sprint swimming were poised to launch their long-course seasons with a set of world class times at the Speedo meet at the Empire Pool in Cardiff last night.

Less than two tenths of a second split Mike Figgins, the world cup series sprint freestyle champion from Barnet Copthall, his club mate Mark Foster, and Austin Shortman, of Bristol Central, in the qualifying heats of the 50 metres freestyle. The final should be much closer still, representing the first time the rivals have raced each other in a 50-metre pool for almost two years.

Their last contest together, at the short course world cup at Leicester six weeks ago resulted in a victory for Figgins that helped him towards the world cup title. But

so closely are the three talents matched that the British short course record rests not with Figgins but Foster at 22.22sec at the end of a winter season in which that standard had also been improved once by Shortman and twice by Figgins.

Last night, displaying why the three rank among the world's top ten 50 metre sprinters, Figgins recorded 23.42sec for a meet record, only to see that lowered by a tenth of a second by Foster in the next heat, with Shortman close behind on 23.49sec.

Jeannette Gunston, of Bracknell, was the fastest qualifier for the 50 metres freestyle final last night. She placed fifth at the event at the 1990 Commonwealth Games.

Results, page 33

## CYCLO-CROSS

## Championship finale will be a threesome

By Peter Bryan

DAVID Baker, the British champion, has his last big race of the season tomorrow knowing that he cannot retain his National Trophy League title for the fifth successive year.

Illness kept the Raleigh team rider out of the first two rounds, but although he is favourite to win at Bingley, the 40 points gained would not take him into the top six places.

Instead, overall victory will go either to Steve Douce, of Daves, or Chris Young, of MBK, who are separated by seven points.

Douce, the league winner three years in succession from

1985 to 87 when his run was stopped by Baker, has two options to ensure another success: to blast off from the gun and take advantage of Young's known slow start or, should that fail, to shadow his Yorkshire rival to the finish.

Young needs to win, with Douce finishing third or fourth, but Baker holds the master card and goes to the race with a fortnight's rest in his legs after finishing Britain's top rider in the world professional championship.

Roger Hammond, the junior world champion, has an eight points lead in his category from his Wembley RC colleague, Stuart Blunt.

## HOCKEY

## Gymkhana lodge appeal

By Sydney Friskin

INDIAN Gymkhana, who have been docked two points by the Pizza Express National League management committee, and fined £200, are appealing to the Hockey Association as they prepare for their first division match against Lyons at Feltham tomorrow.

The committee's decision followed reports on the match against Stourport, which was abandoned because of fog on January 26 with Stourport leading 1-0 after two Gymkhana players had been sent off.

Paul Vijay, Gymkhana's liaison officer, said yesterday that the match against Stourport should never have been started because condi-

tions at the time of abandonment were no worse than when it had started. While accepting their share of the blame for the incidents, he added: "Everyone else seems to have got off scot-free."

Gymkhana are hoping that the association will at least restore the two points so vital in the relegation contest, in which Lyons, Bourville and Welton are also involved.

The impending departure of the British team to Karachi for the Champions Trophy tournament has led to a number of postponements which have diminished interest for the time being in the first division.

In the second division, Surbiton, the leaders, who are

playing Warrington at home tomorrow, will farewell Ian Jolly, the driving force in their attack, who is due for an army posting overseas. With a one-point lead over Reading and two matches to go, Surbiton need to win both to make sure of the title.

The Great Britain team is to play a match at Bisham Abbey tomorrow against an international XI.

□ Denis Hay, the Great Britain women's coach, will tomorrow select his squad for the two international matches against Australia in March. Hay will name 19 players to leave his options open before Britain travel to the United States for training on March 29.

## St Albans take firm grip on their group

Vienna: St Albans, the English champions, took a firm grip on their group with two victories on the first day of the D Division in the European men's indoor club championship.

Ian Jennings scored five goals in their opening 10-7 victory over Roma and added two more in the 7-4 win over WAC Vienna.

NMP Menzieshill, of Scotland, scored three goals in the last two minutes to beat White Star, of Belgium, 7-5 and then snatched a point in an 8-8 draw with Slagelse, of Denmark.

Results, page 33

## YACHTING

## Stakes rise as trials reach a new pitch

San Diego: The challengers resume racing today in round robin two of the America's Cup eliminations for the Louis Vuitton Cup with the competition tightening as each win is worth four points compared to one in round robin one (Bob Ross writes).

Nippon has had a keel change and will have a completely new sail inventory for round robin two.

Il Moro di Venezia has cut a step in her topsides aft, similar to that on New Zealand and Nippon, to save weight, and has gone for more mainsail area.

The familiar pattern in the defender trials round robin two was broken when Stars & Stripes, with a new, more

simple, keel configuration and without her America's Cup-winning skipper, Dennis Conner, at the helm, won by 55sec from the America's team's second-string yacht, Defiant.

With John Bertrand steering in place of Conner, who was on a fund-raising visit to the Miami boat show, Stars & Stripes, with better speed as the wind faced from 14 to 8 knots came from behind to take the lead on the second leg of the course, the third windward beat.

SCOREBOARD: New Zealand (Red Dog), Nippon (Chris Dickson), Japan, 6; Il Moro di Venezia (Paul Cayard), Italy, 5; Stars & Stripes (John Bertrand), 4; Defiant (Dennis Conner), 3; Australia (Peter Gilmour), 2; Ecuador (Pedro Campos), 1; The Koror (Gunnar Knuts), 0; Challenge Australia (Phil Thompson), 0.

## MOTOR RACING

## De Cesaris to take over from Zanardi

TYRRELL have signed the Italian, Andrea de Cesaris, only four days after naming Alessandro Zanardi as their driver for the forthcoming Formula One grand prix season.

De Cesaris, aged 31, takes over from Zanardi as team colleague to Olivier Grouillard, of France. The team manager, Ken Tyrrell, said: "The need to meet the Fisa [International Motor Sports Federation] deadline of February 5 meant that we had to nominate two drivers without the necessary contracts being in place. Subsequently, we were able to conclude an agreement with Andrea."

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# WEEKEND TIMES

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15 1992

## A countryman fights back



**Suffolk-dweller Neil Lyndon, bracing himself for the summer invasion by preaching urbanites intent on recharging their batteries, wishes they would see the reality of country life and all go home**

Country-dwellers will be overjoyed to hear that the countryside is falling from fashionable favour. That centuries-old romance of the British scribbling classes with glade and glen, fell and fen seems to be shedding its Wordsworthian gloss. Wandering lonely as a cloud is beginning to be seen, praise be, as a bit of a drag.

In the last two years, countless famous scribes have described their discontent with the muddy paths, aggressive farmers, poor restaurants and uninspiring society of locals they discovered when they moved to the country; and, shaking the dung from their wellies and leaving their waxed cotton coats for sale at the village fête, they have headed back to the metropolis.

In the early and mid-1980s some of those same names were filling columns declaring that the difficulties of finding a parking space or a reliable nanny had made life in the city impossible. In the next breath, they then wrote articles celebrating their move to the honeysuckle-scented cottage, the heart-warming financial deal they did in exchanging the maisonette in Clapham for the shepherd's cottage on the moors, the eternal values of rural schools and of easy parking at the village pub.

It didn't last. By the turn of the decade, metropolitan writers' honeyed lines of love and jubilation had soured. Stephen Pile lasted about five months in his rural fastness before he turned it in and penned a cracking piece of sarcasm about the boredom of country life. Lynn Barber only had to spend a weekend in the country, discovering that some people there unashamedly enjoy fox-hunting and don't mind saying so, to conclude that Fleet Street marked the outer boundary of civilisation.

In the early 1980s Nigel Hamilton ploughed much of the seed-corn he had garnered from his biography of Montgomery into a half of a house in mid-Suffolk. By 1987 he and his family were back in Pimlico, central London. The following year they took off for America.

The phenomenon, if it be that, merits encouragement, consolidation and extension. The fewer urbanites who take it into their heads to flee this way, the better. For those (why should I pretend to speak for others?) I speak for myself who make their lives in the countryside and endure its deprivations for the sake of its pleasures, nothing is more vexing than the arrival of city migrants who say that they have come "to

recharge their batteries" or to "soak in the peace" — as if the countryside requires nothing of its human inhabitants but a passive receptivity, like a lap-top plugged into the mains supply.

Daytrippers, weekenders, holidaymakers or would-be residents alike, the dead batteries exhaust the patience of those who realise the benefits of country living in the anti-metropolitan pursuit of serious solitude, together with the continuous, active development of interests that can only be followed in the country.

Those benefits are not returned from the countryside in a weekend, a few weeks, or even a year or two. As a rough rule of thumb it takes seven years of concentrated effort and thought to come completely to terms with a garden and all its contents, with the lie of its land and the qualities of its soil, with the pattern of its colours and the balance of its shapes. Gardening in any shorter time is not much more than the dressing of window boxes. It is not serious.

Unless it is invested by its inhabitant with passionate enthusiasm, expressed in dedicated activity, the countryside is nothing more than an ornate tableau of trees, green decoration — one which describes a pattern of ownership rather than the hand of God.

You can't make the most of the country unless you love being alone, and/or you care enough about gardens or birds, boats or horses, shooting or fishing. You have to want to spend the most energetic years of an adult life cultivating the knowledge and understanding of exclusively rural industriousness. If these absorptions are not your speed, you had better stay away. You may count on one certainty: you won't find friends here.

On a mid-winter morning some years ago, I took a Hollywood producer and his wife to my favourite beach, a mile from our house. While I gave them my routine speech about the two centuries of redundant military

defences that lay about them — displaying preparations for four invasions which never came, Napoleonic, Imperial German, Nazi and Soviet — the producer gazed despairingly at the bleak banks of shingle and the cold inhospitality of the North Sea.

"What do you do for friends here?" he asked. He quickly found his own answer: "Nobody in their right mind, I guess, would come here for society."

The best time in the country is when the dead batteries of urban society transport themselves to other, more distant, spots for reinvigoration: that time is now. Those who impose upon themselves solitary confinement in the

Sea, silent but for the calls of shelduck, widgeon and teal. A cormorant jettied its undeviating flight down the middle of the river 5ft above the water.

In four months, after Easter, that bird will have to fly a tortuous multiple chicane through and among the masts of boats at their moorings. The yachts and the cruisers, the yellow wellies and the nautical caps will have returned for their plundering, honking, hooting pleasures and a passage down the river will, again, be like driving down the M25 on bank holidays.

The publicans will paste on their pecuniary grins: the rest of us — locals, as they call us — will sulk.

After Easter, we rural solitaires withdraw into our gardens or let our houses to holiday-makers, and sail away for the summer. Outnumbered by a thousand to one, we know we're temporarily licked. Our surrender, however, is expedient: we also know that we will resume title to the countryside when the frosts and fogs return.

The invasion of the townies would be more welcome if it did not carry with it a flood of sanctimonious preaching about the virtues and the values of the countryside and the ways of its inhabitants.

It is more than mildly galling to go to the pub or the post office and find oneself on the receiving end of a lecture from a stranger, delivered with missionary zeal, on the horrors of blood sports. When the visitor is clad in a soft leather jacket and has just purchased a ham sandwich or a chunk of steak, I usually find myself saying that a society that annually butchers half a billion terrified and screaming animals for human consumption is displaying an odd sense of moral values when it gets more excited about the plight of the few hundred or few thousand foxes killed every year by hunts.

Being a lover of horses but not, generally, of huntsmen, I do not hunt. I feel that I fully understand the attraction of the chase across open country and the pleasures

and difficulties of the ride. But I can't stomach the society of most of those who pursue those pleasures. We leave each other alone, content with mutual dislike. It doesn't seem much to ask that we should also be left alone by those who tramp on to our patch, intent on our conversion and salvation, yet are clueless about our ways.

A similar measure of exasperating incomprehension frustrates conversations between townies and locals over the working of the land. Very few town people have realised that a technological and economic revolution has overtaken the farming industry in the last decade, bringing social and agricultural changes as great as the slaughter of the working horses half a century ago.

The scale of this revolution can be grasped if we say that it matches the contemporaneous transformation of the print industry, with the introduction of the new technology which made the old craft unions redundant.

That revolution in printing has received a thousand times the attention that has been given to the present-day agricultural revolution — chiefly, it appears to me, because the scribbling classes are more concerned with their own business.

Ten years ago each of the three big farms that lie around my village employed about 16 workers. In consequence, the village was genuinely a farming community and the farmers still occupied a squirearchical social role, organising fêtes and barn dances, cricket matches and village parties. Today, each one of those farms employs two or three workers. Hundreds of their acres have been "set aside" or sub-let to pig breeders. Their remaining land is worked by the vast machines the farmers bought in the 1980s and now struggle to pay for, or it is managed by contracted firms of agents who, in turn, employ their own sub-contractors and casual workers.

Convulsive social consequences have resulted from these heralded changes. The village is no longer a farming community. More teachers live here now than farm workers.

The farmers have abandoned their squirearchical role and appear to be beleaguered. We hardly ever see them, except when they are hurtling along the lanes in

which they might have been born have been done up and let to investors, holidaymakers or dead batteries, leaving the locals to find a council house or to shack up with family. Guaranteed wages, pensions and secure accident compensation have largely been eliminated from the industry.

Next to none of these changes have been considered important by the urban-dominated national media. The broad truth is that townies do not wish to know about the realities of life in the country.

The absence of care, however, is not what gets on country people's nerves. It is the fighthness of flirtatious interests that gets us down. Nothing could be more pleasing than the prospect, as it appears, that the one-sided flirtation may now be ending, and that we may, as a result, have a better chance of being left alone.

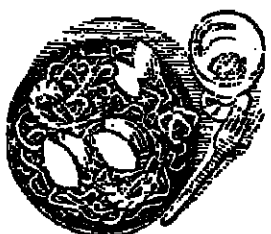


Refugee: Neil Lyndon enjoying the calm before the invasion

**"The fewer urbanites who decide to flee this way, the better"**

country are now enjoying their season of reward — that brief moment when nobody else wants to be here.

One afternoon this week I walked with the dogs for more than an hour beside the river and over the heath to the Sutton Hoo burial site, and saw nobody. A single tractor and trailer were moving on the fields, never less than a mile away. The water was deserted from the Woodbridge harbour clear down the 11 miles to Felixstowe ferry and the North



### CHELSEA MEADES

Jonathan Meades salutes a chef who could finally teach his grandmother how to suck eggs — in a Gascon accent

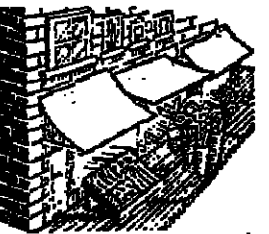
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### DURHAM GLORY

Alan Hamilton salutes the massive majesty of Durham cathedral as it prepares for the 900th birthday celebrations

Page 10



### BEDTIME STORY

Who's been sleeping in my bed? Kay Marles goes shopping for bedroom furniture straight out of a fairytale

Page 14

□ Television: Lynne Truss on programmes good enough for heaven Page 3 □ Gardening: A Euro-threat to British fruit Page 9 □ Out of town: Riding the range in Perth Page 15

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## FILM

**ADAMS FAMILY (PG)** Tasty feast of black humour, inspired by the 1960s TV spin-off from Charles Addams's macabre cartoons. Starring Raul Julia, Anjelica Huston, Christopher Lloyd; director, Barry Sonnenfeld. MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeon Kensington (0426 914666) Muzza (0426 915683)

**BARTON FINK (15)** The Coen brothers' macabre comedy depicts a New York playboy, set in 1940s Hollywood. Starring John Turturro, John Goodman. A triple prize-winner at last year's Cannes Film Festival. Gate (071-434 0031) Lumiere (071-536 0691) Screen on the Hill (071-435 3366)

**BLACK JESUIT (15)** Seventeenth century Jesuit (Lolita: Ewan McGregor) tries to convert Indians in northern Quebec. Starring Ewan McGregor, Bruce Campbell. Director, Bruce Campbell. Canon: Fulham Road (071-267 7034) Cannons: Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 8861) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Notting Hill Coronet (071-277 8705) Plaza (071-497 9999)

**BLAME IT ON THE BELLS (12)** Mischief in Venice imperils a young woman, led by Dudley Moore. Starring Dudley Moore, Kenneth Williams. Director, Mark Herman. Canon: Fulham Road (071-352 5096) Odeon Kensington (0426 914666) Muzza (0426 915683) Whiteley (071-792 3332)



A sultry encounter in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* as Martia

**COUPÉ D'ÉTÉ (12)** Three young people in a road-cross-country in a 1954 Cadillac. Breezy blend of road movie, male bonding comedy, and 1960s nostalgia. With Patrick Dempsey, Arya Gress, Daniel Stern, director, Joe Roth. Canon: Fulham Road (071-330 0651)

**DELICATESSEN (15)** French video whizkids Jeanne and Caro's wondrously bizarre fantasy about a couple of tenants living above a cannibalistic butcher. With Dominique Pinon, Marie-Laure Dougnac. Canon: Shaftesbury Avenue (071-352 5096) Tottenham Court Road (071-352 5096) Metro (071-437 0757) Screen on Baker Street (071-395 2722)

**THE FALCON, THE WATCH AND THE VERY BIG FISH (15)** Frisky comedy about a French photographer of devotional scenes (Ecclesiastes) struggling to find his Christ. With Jeff Goldblum, Natasha Richardson, Ben Lewis. Odeon Kensington (0426 915683)

**FOR THE BURN (15)** Song and dance team entertain troops in three acts, only to be run by a synthetic script. With Betty Midler, James Caan, director, Mark Fydell. Odeon Kensington (0426 915683)

914666) West End (0426 915674) Whiteleys (071-792 3332)

**FRANKIE AND JOHNNY (15)** Short-order cook (Al Pacino) courts a wary waitress (Michelle Pfeiffer). Synthetic adaptation of Terrence McNally's play. Director, Barry Marshall. Canon: Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Whiteleys (071-792 3332)

**HORS LA VIE (15)** Masterly account of a French hostage's life in the turmoil of Beirut. Starring Hippolyte Girardot; director, Maroun Bagdadi. Canon: Tottenham Court Road (071-336 6148)

**JFK (15)** Oliver Stone's contentious, electrifying, three-hour drama about the Kennedy assassination. Kevin Costner as assassinating D.A. Jim Garrison, a bustling supporting cast. Canon: Parkway (071-267 7034) Cannons: Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 8861) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Notting Hill Coronet (071-277 8705) Plaza (071-497 9999)

**LITTLE MAN TATE (PG)** How and how not to rear a child prodigy. An engaging young player (Adam Hann-Bryd) and sensible direction (Jodie Foster) easily offset the facile moments. Odeon Kensington (0426 914666) Whiteleys (071-792 3332)

**THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE (18)** Tangled affairs of a philandering journalist (Peter Firth). Flawed comedy that seems left over from the Swinging Sixties: writer-director David Cohen. Canon: Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Piccadilly (071-437 3561)

**PROBLEM CHILD II (PG)** Darnal sequel to an already dire original, with Michael Oliver (the delinquent type), John Ritter (the divorced dad), and much flying vomit. Canon: Oxford Street (071-636 0310)

**STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY (PG)** So far, then, Kirk and Spock, battling galaxy war-mongers, their last screen adventure. Underwhelming, but adequate. With William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy; director, Nicholas Meyer. Canon: Baker Street (071-330 0651) Fulham Road (071-370 2636) Empire (071-497 9999) Whiteleys (071-792 3332)

**URGA (PG)** Nikita Mikhalkov's mesmerising film about civilisation encroaching on the Mongolian steppes. The top prize-winner at last year's Venice Film Festival. Canon: Mayfair (071-465 8865)

**LES VALSEUSES (18)** Gérard Depardieu and Patrick Dewaere in 1974, as two leads with little hands. Timely revival of Bertrand Blier's ferocious, amoral, snook-cooking 1974 romp. Canon: Piccadilly (071-437 3561)

## THEATRE

## LONDON

**'ALLO, 'ALLO:** Gordon Kaye and his team of funny frogs and krauts up to their familiar antics for a four-week season. Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (071-590 8845). Mon-Thurs, 8pm, Fri and Sat 5.30pm and 8.30pm

**BECKET:** Riveting performances from Derek Jacobi-

and Robert Lindsay in Anouilh's play on the relationship between Thomas à Becket and Henry II.

**THE COTTON CLUB:** An impression of the Harlem nightclub high on energy, low on story freshness. Aldwych, WC2 (071-836 8404). Mon-Fri, 7.30pm, Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm.

**DANCING AT LUGHNASSA:** Brian Friel's Olivier Award-winning memory-play, set in 1930s Donegal. Garfield, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-494 5085). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

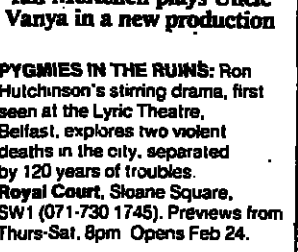
**THE GIGLI CONCERT:** Barry Foster is obsessed with making an Irish millionaire (Tony Doyle) into the new Gigli in Tom Murphy's powerful fable. Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (071-359 4404). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Sat, 4pm.

**GOOD ROCKIN' TONITE:** Satisfying musical celebrating Fifties and Sixties pop classics. Great stuff. Strand, Aldwych, WC2 (071-240 0300). Mon-Thurs, 8pm, Fri, Sat, 5.30pm and 8.30pm.

**DEATH AND THE MAIDEN:** Juliet Stevenson, Bill Paterson and Michael Byrne in West End transfer of Anel Dorfman's exceptionally powerful play concerned with the trauma of torture. Best play of 1991. Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 5122). Preview tonight, Mon, 8pm. Opens Tues, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

**MURMURING JUDGES:** David Harv tackles our rotting legal system: gaps in the contest but a powerful bout. National (Olivier), South Bank, SE1 (071-828 2252). Tonight, Mon, 7.15pm, mat today, 2pm.

**THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA:** Alfred Molina and a superb Ellen Atkins in Tennessee Williams's late play on the various effects of sexual repression. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (071-828 2252). Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, mat Thurs, 2.15pm.



Ian McKellen plays Uncle Vanya in a new production

**PIGMEES IN THE RUINS:** Ron Hutchinson's stirring drama, first seen at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, explores two violent deaths in the city, separated by 120 years of troubles. Royal Court, Sloane Square, SW1 (071-730 1745). Preview from Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Opens Feb 24.

**SOPHISTICATED LADIES:** Twelve singer-dancers whirl through the music of Duke Ellington. Obvious copes cannot disguise the true useful Duke Globe, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (071-494 5065). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm.

**A SWELL PARTY:** Four singers, two pianists in likeable tribute to Cole Porter's wit and wry melodies. Vaudeville, The Strand, WC2 (071-836 9987). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.30pm, mats Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 5.30pm.

**TALKING HEADS:** Patricia Routledge and Alan Bennett excellent in three of his monologues charting the unconscious humour and pain of desolate lives. Comedy, Pantion Street, SW1 (071-867 1045). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 4pm.

**UNCLE VANYA:** Ian McKellen, Antony Sher, Lesley Sharp in promising new version from Pam Gems, directed by Sean Mathias. National (Cottesloe), South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 2252). Preview from Thurs-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm. Opens Feb 25.

**REGIONAL**

**BOLTON:** Revival of *Spring and Port Wine* to celebrate the life of local author Bill Naughton, who died last month. Three former Coronation Street actors in the cast. The cast to be played on different nights by Walsley and Quaver Octagon, Howell Croft South (0204 20661). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm.

**GLASGOW:** New season begins with *Nagana*, two-hander between Houdini and a young woman (Third Theatre). 1953. Craig Raine's update of Raine's *Andromache* (Second Theatre), and P.G. Wodehouse's *Summer Lightning*, adapted by Giles Haverall (First Theatre). Citizens Theatre, Gorbals (041 429 0022). *Nagana*, preview Tues opens Wed, 7.30pm. *Summer Lightning*, preview Thurs, opens Fri. All performances Mon-Sat, 7.30pm.

**MANCHESTER:** Michael Sheen wows Kate Byers in Gregory Hershey's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. In a theatre-in-the-round the balcony scene may pose a problem.



Adrift in Hollywood: John Turturro stars as Barton Fink (seated), and Jon Polito as Lou Breeze

Royal Exchange, St Ann's Square (081-882 9291), next Sat, 8pm.

**OPERA**

**PELLÉAS ET MELISANDE:** This new production by Peter Stein of Debussy's masterpiece brings one of its most revealing interpreters, Pierre Boulez, to the Cardiff pit. He conducts a cast including Alison Hagley, Neil Archer and Donald Maxwell. Not to be missed. New Theatre, Cardiff (0222 394844), Fri, 7.15pm.

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10am-5.30pm, Sun, 2.5-3pm, from February 18 until early 1993

**JENNIFER DURRANT:** The Barbican Centre is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. One of the shows commemorating the occasion is that devoted to *Shine* and about 40 other paintings by Jennifer Durrant. Characteristically, they are abstracts with mystical overtones, working in sequences where particular colours and shapes are progressively transformed to produce new harmonies and limited significances.

**Concourse Gallery, Barbican Centre, London EC2 (071-638 4141).** Mon-Sat, 10am-7.30pm, Sun, midday-7.30pm, from February 20 to March 24.

**DOUBLETAKE:** The general subject of this large international show is 'Collective Memory and Current Art'. Even the designer, Aldo Rossi, is renowned for his writings on collective memory in architecture, and the 22 artists included are all very conscious of living in and on the mass media's vast store of shared experiences. Works are made the Hayward and scattered around in the open; the media are sometimes improbable.

**Needlepoint views of Australian monuments?** It will be interesting to see what memory bank Narelle Jubelin has tapped into. Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London SE1 (071-261 0177). Daily, 10am-6pm (Tues, Wed to 8pm), from February 20 to April 19.

**THE BROTHERS ROBINSON:** Not only William Heath, but also his older brothers Thomas Heath and Charles were notable book illustrators. Though Heath Robinson (i.e., William) entered the dictionary as a synonym for grimace, fantastical machinery, and made most of his later fame and fortune from pursuing these more eccentric interests, he was also an exquisite draughtsman and a charming author for children. Charles was of a more lively fantasy, and Thomas the most robust. An unusual pleasure to meet them in a family.

**Chris Beetles, 8 & 10 Ryder Street, London SW1 (071-839 7551).** Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, from February 17-March 20.

**LUCIAN FREUD:** Though all recent shows of Freud seem to include the same nucleus of works, this one covers the whole of his career and has already been seen in Rome and Milan under the aegis of the British Council. Also, it includes all 11 works owned by the Tate, as well as loans from several countries, so it has its quota of the unfamiliar to balance the almost too famous.

**Tate Gallery, Albert Docks, Liverpool (051-709 3223).** Tues, 11am-6pm, Wed-Sun, 10am-6pm.

**THE ART OF DEATH:** Most of us are secretly fascinated by death; but such is our fear and embarrassment that we will do anything rather than talk about it. By contrast our poet-Religionists ancestors reacted energetically to the prospect of their own mortality. This exhibition spanning the years from 1500-1800 shows how people surrounded themselves with reminders of death and how they would work hard to commemorate friends and relatives who had died.

**Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, SW7 (071-638 8384).** Mon-Sat 10am-5.40pm, Sun 2.30-5.40pm, until March 22.

**CUMBER FLAMENCO:** This troupe of flamenco dancers makes a return visit to Sadler's Wells following its sell-out season there in the summer of 1990. The Andalusian dancers, musicians and singers each perform with an individual style, though they all possess the passionate and dramatic style of flamenco. The company opens a two-week season on Tuesday.

**Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (071-278 8916).** Tues-next Sat, 7.30pm, mat next Sat, 2.30pm.

**EXHIBITIONS**

**NEW DISPLAYS 1992:** Under Nicholas Serota the new year's rehang at the Tate is becoming an eagerly awaited annual event 'what seems to have been arrived at is a happy compromise between permanent display and constantly changing exhibition. Highlights this year include rooms devoted to such subjects as the British Surrealists, Hogarth and his Circle, and Post-War Abstraction—Paris, as well as a re-examination of the British kitchen sink.

**Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1 (071-821 1313).** Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm.

**EDWARD BURRA'S THE SNACK BAR ON DISPLAY AT THE TATE**

**SALE ROOMS**

**MONDAY:** Bonhams celebrate 20th century furniture designs from Alvar Alito to Stefan Zwicky in an evening session, 6pm. Bonhams Montpelier Street, London SW7 (071 584 9161)

**TUESDAY:** There are over 800 varied lots on offer at the Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse, where Andrew Grant is in action from 10.30am. In Manchester's Capes Dunn have sections of children's books, illustrated works and annuals in their book and prints sale, 12 noon. Among the costumes and textiles offered by Christie's South Kensington, 2pm, are two lawyers' wigs (up to £150 each). Andrews Grant St Mark's Close, Cherry Orchard, Worcester (0905 357 547). Capes Dunn 38 Charles Street, Manchester (061 273 1911). Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (071 581 7611).

**WEDNESDAY THURSDAY AND FRIDAY:** This should be a good week for fishermen and natural history buffs. On Wednesday there is a Hardy rod among the antiques in Cooper Hirst's Chelmsford sale, 10.30am, and a taxidermy section at the same time with Giles Haywood of Stourbridge, while a stuffed pile lurks among the lots offered by C B Sheppard at Sutton-in-Ashfield, 12 noon. Thursday sees a specialist sale at Bonhams with fishy paintings and fishing equipment, 2pm. On Friday Moore Allen & Innocent of Chancery offer a sporting sale with paintings of stuffed birds and beasts, shotguns, tackle, tack, games, equipment and literature, 10.30am. At the same time the antique and picture

sale at the Truro Auction Centre has a taxidermy collection which includes two crocodiles. Cooper Hirst Victoria Road, Haywood St Johns Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands (0384 370 891). C B Sheppard, Chatterworth St, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottingham (0773 872 419). Moore Allen & Innocent 33 Castle Street, Creicester (0285 651 831). The Truro Auction Centre, Calenick Street, Truro (0872 260 020).

**THURSDAY:** 18th century shoes and a good looking early ship model, and collections of walking sticks and meerschaum pipes are offered with furniture, ceramics, dolls, and textiles by Wooley & Wiles of Salisbury, 10am. One of the best 19th century valve pianos, John Miles of Northwich, is represented by a mare and foal in Mallam's Chatterham sale, 11am. In London Phillips have books, atlases and maps, including art reference and architecture, 11am and 2pm. The toys at Christie's South Kensington include a rare warren of wicker Aerographe Constructeur Set (up to £350), and a Normura Robba The Robot at up to £1,000.2pm. Woolley & Wiles, the Auction Mart, Castle Street, Salisbury (0722 411 422). Mallam's 26 Grosvenor Street, Cheltenham (0242 235 712). Phillips 101 New Bond Street, London W1 (071 629 6602).

**VIDEOS**

**EDWARD SCISSORHANDS (FoxVideo, PG):** Tim Burton's captivating fantasy tale about a boy with pruning shears for hands, at large in a pastel-hued suburbia. Teen idol Johnny Depp (white-faced and wistful) makes an appealing hero, Winona Ryder supplies the love interest, but plot remains subservient to mood and setting. 1991.

**THE JAZZ SINGER (Warner Video, U):** Spatterings



# Case of the custard eruption

**Lynne Truss on where programmes go when they die — and the reincarnation of Maigret**

Against a dazzling backdrop of bright blue sky and white wispy clouds, Frank Muir sits on a tall stool and tells us about *TV Heaven*, his twinkling manner faintly reminiscent of the angel Clarence in *It's a Wonderful Life*.

We viewers suck our fingers and jig in our seats. Oh, goody. It is Saturday at 8pm, and Channel 4's new retro slot is about to start, with three and a half hours of programmes and titles from 1967. We are in for a treat, then; and probably growing a bit light-headed in anticipation. Hello clouds, hello sky, hello classic *Coronation Street*. But then Uncle Frank leans forward and smilingly explains the evening's conceit, for those of us too excited to work it out. *TV Heaven*, he says, is where TV programmes go to — but only if they're good.

Well, I'm sure he meant it kindly, but it was still a very sobering piece of news. I instantly stopped feeling excited, and started feeling worried. Had somebody mentioned moral absolutes? Had *Paradise Lost* somehow got mixed up with *The Prisoner*? I was assailed by visions of "bad" television being cast from the empyrean and tumbling through the everlasting night of the cosmos — and it seemed a bit out of proportion, somehow. I mean, *Brides of Christ* is certainly bad but it surely doesn't deserve eternal damnation.

I imagine the end of each week's broadcasting day in 1992. A moving staircase, the tick of the metronome and crowds of lacklustre sitcoms ascend to the gates in long, dreary lines. At the top, Jeremy Paxman (with a halo) checks each name in a big book, shakes his heavy head — and whoops, there goes another one.

*TV Heaven* put an interesting complexion on the week's viewing, however. Which were the chosen? Each instalment of *Olympics 92* (BBC1/BBC2), for example, surely held the potential for a place in the TV firmament, alongside the mauve-chiffoned Botticelli image of Torvill and Dean, but early in the week

## REVIEW

there was little excitement on the skating rink (nothing welkin-worthy anyway).

I got my hopes up for a little while when I caught sight of a pink patch on the ice, and jumped to the conclusion that there had been a grisly accident (or at least a famous nose-bleed) which would be revealed in the evening highlights. But, alas, the pink patch turned out to be the Winter Olympics symbol, frosted into the ice, and so another shot at *TV Heaven* fell to earth unnoted.

I do have misgivings about the revival of old television programmes. At the same time as they jog the memory, warm the cockles and break the ice at parties, they bring the past into the present in a way that I find uncomfortable.

Take the death of *Coronation Street*'s Harry Hewitt, for example (shown on Saturday). This made a huge impression on me at the time. Elsie Tanner's wedding was just complete, the reception still jumping, and outside in the street Harry is killed under a stationary van when a jack slips. To me, this event belongs in my own memory, rubbing shoulders with other personal events of 25 years ago (my first false teeth, for example). Showing it on television in 1992 somehow misses the point. Also (and more importantly), it makes me feel like a mug for bothering to remember it for 25 years.

Perhaps the lesson of *TV Heaven* is that, instead of committing programmes to memory, we should pray for their immortal souls, and get on with something else. No doubt the old Rupert Davies *Maigret* series is comfortably ensconced in the abode of the blest; so perhaps we earth-crawlers should simply forget about it.

Whether or not the new Michael Gambon version will gain entrance is of course a matter for the great Paxman in the sky. But to judge from the relaxed dramatic pace of the first, 90-minute episode ("The Patience of Maigret",



Patience of a saint: Michael Gambon filling the screen, and taking the human approach, as the great Maigret

by Alan Plater), at least one can be sure that Gambon's Maigret would quite cheerfully bide a few years in limbo, if called upon to do so. Yes, even unto seventy times seven.

The point about Maigret is that he doesn't dash about finding clues, or solving cases by crunching his little grey cells together. He takes the more human approach: as one of Simonon's commentators phrased it, each Maigret case is less a problem to resolve than a drama to be understood.

Thus, observing the apartment house where a murder has occurred, Maigret sits across the square at an outdoor café and remarks philosophically that each tenant has his own history, his own morality. In Maigret's world there are no criminals; just people "driven to the limit". "Round up the usual suspects" is not a command that springs readily to his lips, because it would mean arresting the entire population of Paris. So, if it takes seven years properly to solve a series of jewel robberies, it is merely a tribute to this chief inspector's famous patience.

Gambon is terrific as Maigret. His great quality is to fill the screen without appearing to, just as Maigret quietly subsumes all the characters into himself, in order to "understand the drama". This must be a little discouraging for the other actors, come to think of it, but perhaps the series was safely in the can before anybody twigged the problem. Think of any scene in "The Patience of Maigret", however, and it's true: the other actors just fade into the wallpaper with a resigned little wave. Bye bye Cheryl Camp-

bell, bye bye Trevor Peacock. Finally, perhaps the high point of the week was in Tuesday's *Food and Drink* (BBC2), which reported on the phenomenon of drinks that explode after being heated in microwave ovens. This is a serious problem, apparently. An innocuous bowl of piping-hot custard, fresh from the microwave, suddenly turns into Mount St Helens on the dinner table: warmed-up coffee jumps straight out of the cup (like a chorus-girl from a birthday cake) and shrieks. "You want

caffeine? Have I got caffeine?" before scalding your face. *Food and Drink* accounted for itself very responsibly: it explained the physics, gave safety advice, and laid out the proper authorities for not obliging manufacturers to give proper instructions. But the fascination of the item, the reason it made you jump up and down on the sofa, was that you desperately wanted it to say, "For goodness sake, what's the hurry? Why don't you use a kettle, like everyone else?" Perhaps it was the influence of Maigret.

## Held captive in the back seat

### PREVIEW

● **Rides** (Tuesday, BBC1, 9.30pm)

It sounds like a sure-fire idea: Jill Baker plays a tough ex-soldier running an all-woman mini-cab firm in a series devised and written by Carole Hayman, of *Tenko* fame. As with *Tenko*, it seems, survival is the crux of the matter, but there are differences too — in particular, I would hazard, less emaciation, and more runs to the airport.

● **Bookmark: Miss Pym's Day Out** (Wednesday, BBC2, 8.10pm)

More sterling work from *Bookmark*, with a tribute to the English novelist Barbara Pym, who died in 1980. *The Times Literary Supplement* once memorably said that Barbara Pym made "a scrupulously detailed picture of people living like mice in the wainscoting of life" — which is not only a perfect image, but also a nice reminder of the word wainscoting.

James Runcie's film is an adventurous dramatisation of a day in Barbara Pym's own quiet, wainscoted life. Fictional characters are mixed with

real ones (such as Jilly Cooper and Miss Pym is played by the very wonderful Patricia Routledge).

● **Gardeners' World** (Friday, BBC2, 8.30pm) The BBC's decision to commit *Gardeners' World* to an independent production company seems to have resulted in widespread panic. There was even some sort of alarmist rumour that we had seen the last of *Barnsley*; and that we might never know the outcome of Geoff Hamilton's consumer tests on pea-substitutes. To sum up, then: a trying period for us all. So it is wonderful to report that Geoff returns next Friday with a new series and a new co-presenter (Liz Rigby, former editor of *The Archers*). A few regulars have been dropped (one imagines them impaled on pitchforks in Anne Swinbank's greenhouse), but this is not necessarily a reason for regret.

L. T.

**GUILTY SECRETS: LIZ CALDER, Publisher**

"Well, I'm not addicted to *Blind Date*. I always turn on the news and I would say I'm addicted to *What the Papers Say*, although I always manage to forget when it's on. I just like journalists talking about each other, and it's a sort of sideways view of the news, which you get through the journalist talking about newspapers. Each programme is presented by a journalist.

"Richard Ingrams is my favourite. I'm addicted to anything with Richard in it, because he makes me laugh. I'm addicted to all the old comedy programmes, such as *Fawlty Towers*, which I adore. I



don't mind watching the repeats. "I also like *Spitting Image*. My favourite thing is anything that makes me laugh."

## Shadows dim the sun over Little England

**Paradise for many is the Costa del Sol. Channel 4 on Monday spells out the reality**

Saturday night in Benalmadena: El Elefante bar is packed with British pensioners warbling "Edelweiss". This week, Le Roy from Ireland is top of the bill. When the pony-tailed folk-singer finishes his turn he is met with applause and cries of "encore". It is midnight. He is very hot and very tired. "Don't you have homes to go to?" he asks.

They have indeed. These Guinness drinkers are not tourists but citizens of that corner of the Costa del Sol known as Little England. The set for the forthcoming BBC soap of that name is slowly going up in Coin, a 30-minute drive inland.

Next Monday at 9pm, a glimpse of expatriate life will be seen on Channel 4 in the two-part documentary *Coast of Dreams*, made by Touch Productions, whose *Watching the Detectives* series last year on real-life private eyes shattered many an illusion. This time round it is the characters, not the viewers, who have their rose-tinted spectacles removed.

The first part, "Paradise in the Sun", reveals the economic reality that British would-be bar-owners face when they sell up their homes to live and work in Spain. Most of the 389 watering holes and 277 eateries in Benalmadena are run by the British for the British. There are too many bars and too few customers.

Mike and Betti Thompson have had The Bee's Knees for six years. Their "traditional London boozery" is on the six-lane highway that connects Malaga to Estepona. "People look abroad, see the sun, remember the holiday atmosphere and start packing their bags," Mr Thompson says. "They forget that as a bar-owner you have to be 'on holiday' 365 days a year. It's



Selling up: Mike Thompson, owner of The Bee's Knees

no good thinking that all you have to do is open the doors and the punters will come in and spend themselves silly, because they won't. You've got to make it that bit more pleasurable so that they'll keep on coming back. It's very hard work."

One day last summer the Thompsons served 186 roast beef lunches, with apple pie for afters — all cooked by Mrs Thompson in the tiny kitchen, where the temperature simmered at 38C. In the early days Mrs Thompson, who had been on an expensive cookery course, made *tapas*, but the customers demanded cheese toasties.

In The Bee's Knees, its walls decorated with West Ham regalia, a collection of hats and snapshots of satisfied customers, a septuagenarian named Iris renowned for putting the bad into *lambada*, said: "I come back every year. It gets quite wild sometimes."

In the steep, narrow streets of Little England there are French, German, Dutch and Danish ghettos. The English, though, are past-masters at disguising prejudice as patriotism. Few bother to learn Spanish.

Doreen Bailes left Fleetwood, Lancashire, with her husband Ernest in search of the sun. Basking on the balcony of their sixth-floor flat in Monday's documenta-

ry, she announces: "It's like being a film star." Then it's back to the kitchen to make Lancashire hotpot.

Around the corner is the Hotel Bali which, although the tourist slump is said to be the worst for 20 years, is full of British and Spanish pensioners. The Brits come with Thompsons; the Spanish on a government scheme.

Part two of the documentary, "Paradise Lost", looks at tourism from the Spanish point of view. The superb scenery around Ronda is threatened by developers, who want to build residential complexes and six golf courses for the as yet non-existent second wave of tourists.

Back in Benalmadena the only signs of growth are the *Se Venide* boards springing up everywhere. Many bar-owners are succumbing to bankruptcy, alcoholism and divorce. For all the joshing that goes on in the resort, an air of desperation reigns.

And the Thompsons, exhausted by the daily grind, and of being attacked or robbed, want out. They have found a buyer for The Bee's Knees, but a loophole in the lease has ensnared them in a legal battle that could cost them the bar and their home.

Mrs Thompson is bitter: "There's only one law, and that is for the Spanish. Spain to me is a very sad country."

MARK SANDERSON

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**Which?**  
THE UNBIASED FACTS







## Islander's mistaken attempt to escape

DEREK WALCOTT's play was first performed in Los Angeles, where audiences would have been more aware of the irony of its title than the good citizens of NW6. These days the best of Motown is as unappetising as the worst of the City of Angels. Much of Woodward Avenue, before the riots of 1968 one of America's great streets, looks like war-torn Beirut.

When I lived nearby, as I did in the later 1980s, the great civic problems were how to stop children taking guns to school, how to control the proliferating crack houses, and how to prevent the populace burning down what was left of their city on Halloween. To yearn to escape there, like the West Indian protagonist of *Viva Detroit*, is as eccentric as if some updated three sisters were planning to relocate in Chernobyl rather than in Moscow.

At any rate, it tells us plenty about Steve Toussaint's Sonny and his erratic relationship to reality. He is a blend of dreamer, gigolo and chameleon, quick to adopt whatever colouring will con women visitors to St Lucia out of their virtue and their jewellery.

When Marlana Mackey's Pat, a white photographer

### THEATRE

**Viva Detroit**  
Tricycle, Kilburn

from New York, appears at the hotel bar, he first of all passes himself off as a rich, brash American who somehow combines aggressive Republican views with respect for Jesse Jackson. Finding this turns her off more than on, he takes aim at her liberal scruples, presenting himself as a poor, unspoiled native, outside "your horridous glass and air-conditioning". But clearly that is not the most seductive of come-ons, either.

With Norman Beaton as a barman, exuding canny fatalism from beneath a wig that looks as though it were custom-designed for the singing nun in *The Sound of Music*, all this makes for a lively opening. Toussaint is a strong, bold actor with, as it turns out, a certain vulnerability beneath his cocky manner. Mackey is a bright, vivid addition to the Black Theatre Co-op's ranks, too.

No matter if they do not altogether convince us of the love that does eventually evolve between them, Walcott clearly wants to keep us

guessing about its authenticity and its durability.

The trouble is that too much guesswork is expected of us in a second half that, for all the assurance of Malcolm Frederick's direction, gets increasingly lost. Pat reappears from a trip back home, disguised as a grotesque slattern. She then inveigles Sonny into making a half-hearted sexual advance, reveals herself, threatens him with a pistol and finally offers him a forged American visa.

Before long, the play's tone has become as awkward and uncertain as its eventual outcome. There may, perhaps, be substance in Sonny's parting suggestion that Pat would find it hard to accept his transformation from a happy-go-lucky islander into a full-time American; but by now her motives are altogether inscrutable.

Besides, the play's grip has faltered so badly it is impossible to care very much if Sonny ends up in Detroit or Dacca. For similar reasons, it is difficult to take him quite as seriously as Walcott seems to ask.

Not only does he ruefully describe his function as being to boost the local economy by grinning as much and as widely as he can. Not only



Implausible trio: Marlana Mackey, Steve Toussaint (front) and Norman Beaton

does he declare, "I lose my identity once I start asking myself who I really am." Norman Beaton is on hand to italicise the already emphatic with: "If we can save you, we can save the island."

In other words, he is not just a St Lucian, but St Lucia itself, the exemplary victim of a neo-colonialist tourist-trade and his country's cultural confusions. That may be an accurate diagnosis on Wal-

cott's part; but the author needs to construct a far more plausible plot if he is to prove his case.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

## Worth a detour

### CONCERT

**Nash Ensemble**  
St John's, Smith Square

ELENA FIRSOVA's music had friends in Britain even before the Gorbachev era. Now that the Russian composer is living here, her music may become even more familiar: a big Blake setting for choir and orchestra is due at this year's Proms. Meanwhile the Nash Ensemble this week at St John's Smith Square introduced a smaller recent piece, *Odyssey*, with a story behind it almost as strange and beguiling as the music itself.

Two years ago Firsova received a telegram from Paris commissioning a score to be carried by a lone British oarsman, one Peter Bird, on a voyage across the Pacific from Vladivostok to San Francisco, there to be performed by "a great American conductor (we are thinking of Mr Previn)". Alas the project evaporated, but by that time Firsova had written her piece, and therefore had an *Odyssey* without an *Odyssey*.

So it remains, but for this occasion the part of Previn was played by Richard Berris, who conducted a beautiful performance of a journey waiting through various musical textures. Begun tentatively and delicately by string trio and harp, the path is joined by other travellers — a flute, a horn, a player on vibraphone and bells — who

create around themselves an almost tangible landscape of sustained harmony and slow change. There are cadenzas for cello and flute, the former reaching way over the treble staff and played with superb ease and definition by Caroline Dale. Yet all the time it seems to be the same journey that is going on, leading (if without geographical accuracy) through ice floes of high string harmonies to a sighting of the United States in a quotation from Ives's *The Unanswered Question*.

Also on this programme, the second of two typical Nash evenings combining focus (on Russian) with wide range, were Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* and Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*. Brian Bannatyne-Scott gave a splendid account of the latter: resolutely in control and authoritative, always musical, projecting dark nights of the soul and body by colour and weight of tone without histrionics. There was the promise here of a fine Boris Godunov.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

## History lesson wears a smile

THE new show by Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble is based on a text by Oda Ofeimun, presenting elements from the history of southern Africa over the past two centuries. Speech and song introduce each dance, with a white-clad Priestess of Memory the one continuing character linking the others.

Not surprisingly, some of the most enthusiastic applause went to a vehement call to struggle for liberation, but the final message is of the need for all races to seek a peaceful way of sharing the land. There is humour as well as sincerity in the writing, not least in a neat caricature of Cecil Rhodes.

A limitation of the dances is



Adzido: exhilarating zest

### DANCE

**Siye Goli**  
Sadler's Wells

that most of them offer quick repeated movements on the spot, or with only limited floor patterns. The vigour of the performers is exhilarating, but at times a feeling of sameness creeps in. So the episode when a woman ruler leads her followers, with cheerful belligerence, round and round the stage is all the more welcome by contrast.

Another highlight comes near the end in a Mbende dance from Zimbabwe. Originating as a celebration of the marriage of a chief's daughter, it includes a recurring motif for one couple after another who jump at each other, collide mid-air belly to belly, and bounce apart again. The allusion is obvious, explicit but light-hearted and not the least bit indecent.

I am not sure that the relationship of the various dances to the topics they were meant to illustrate was always entirely clear, but they do represent a wide anthology drawn from seven different countries, and covering a range of different moods. A group of drummers across the back of the stage keeps the energy fired all the time.

Apologies are due to Ballet Du Nord and to Sadler's Wells for a misunderstanding which caused my notice last week to describe it as a fringe company when what I wrote was a French company. I would be sorry to seem to suggest that London's nearest approach to a dance house was in the fringe business.

JOHN PERCIVAL

## Genuinely hopeless?

ALWAYS mysterious, the interplay between image, music and hype within the pop business has been growing increasingly opaque to outsiders. A Welsh rock four-piece of two years' vintage, named Manic Street Preachers, exemplify this trend.

Both public and critics now know they were right to deride the self-consciously subversive tactics of Sique Sique Sputnik — the band that signed to EMI in the mid-Eighties for an exaggerated sum of money and then failed to sell copies of their absurd cocktail of science-fiction imagery and rock 'n' roll rebellion. There is far less conviction surrounding Manic Street Preachers. Even their most fervent defenders harbour doubts. Initially, the band seemed a vehicle for punk nostalgia. Were they packaging teen rebellion into "retro" product, or were they hopelessly genuine beautiful losers and rock revolutionaries?

Now they have signed with the Sony Corporation, the questions have changed slightly. Are they just another bunch of fame-hungry turncoats, ready to eject their rebel pose at the first opportunity, or will passion, poetry and media awareness fuse into something meaningful?

Their debut album has sorted out the musical aspect at least. *Generation Terrorists* is a double album of dreary guitar clichés, likely to

### ROCK RECORDS

**Manic Street Preachers:**  
*Generation Terrorists*  
(Columbia 471060 2)

induce sleep rather than passion. Manic Street Preachers may sound vibrant, young and sexy in three-minute doses but, over the wastelands of a double CD, they might be middle-aged session hacks.

The extra-musical factors are less easily dismissed. The band has obvious appeal to innocent first-time record buyers. Pretty, pretentious, full of energy and righteous anger, they have all the basic ingredients of classic pop idols. Lyrics which attack global corporations, the alienation of consumerism and political hypocrisy exactly mirror the frustrations of a generation which feels that no gesture can escape the destiny of becoming a commodity, a marketing plan or an advertising slogan.

The quotes which they append to each track title come from sources as diverse as Philip Larkin, Nietzsche and Valerie Solanas. To somebody who has seen all this before, the effect is comic. Yet nobody could disagree entirely with their lift from the manifesto of the Futurists: "Regard all art critics as useless and dangerous."

DAVID TOOP

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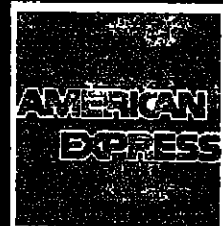
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# A tale of two Koffmanns

Pierre Koffmann's *Memoirs of Gascony* won last year's Glenfiddich award for food book of the year. It's a gastronomic autobiography of a sort that could not be written by a chef who had grown up in, say, Somerset or on The Marches. Or, indeed, anywhere in Britain during the period that Mr Koffmann describes, i.e. the 1950s and 1960s. With his French-based English collaborator, Timothy Shaw, he proves to be something of an Alain-Fournier of the stove. It is a book with a marked sense of place — a small village in the Gers; and with a marked respect for seasonal traditions, culinary resourcefulness and the earth. The author's grandparents were smallholders, his grandmother an inspiring cook whose recipes were, without exception, founded in the vernacular practice of her parish. The book is, of course, sometimes sentimental — but rarely mawkish. It is also eminently utile: the recipes are ones that most reasonably accomplished domestic cooks can tackle with confidence.

So what has Pierre Koffmann, gastro-poet of rural Gascony, got to do with Pierre Koffmann, chef-proprietor of Tante Claire in urban Chelsea? The answer used to be: not much. Both men answered to the same name, but beyond that the correspondences were few. The paramount reason for this bifurcation is perhaps explained simply by the fact of Mr Koffmann belonging to a generation of French chefs who trained and began to practise professionally in the late 1960s, when a more or less revolutionary gale was blowing through the kitchens of grand restaurants: his grandmother's cooking had no place. Now, a decade and a half after he opened Tante Claire, the peasant tradition, *cuisine de terroir*, is back in favour and — this is of more moment than you might believe — not likely to be frowned upon by the Michelin men, at least not in France. At this rarefied end of the culinary trade, the tyrannical influence of the rosette donors should never be underestimated; they encourage inhibition and a sort of self-censorship. And Tante Claire has two rosettes, hard won and not to be let go of by the injudicious introduction of dishes insufficiently elaborated for Michelin's taste. So the process of convergence between the two Koffmanns has been gradual, almost imperceptible.

Now, at last, Tante Claire seems to be biased towards the provision of dishes which its chef's grandmother would acknowledge as having much in common with hers. Not that the grandson ever

**Ancient techniques from rural Gascony reign in urban Chelsea, says Jonathan Meades**

went overboard for wayward novelty, but he did have an orientalist phase, and he did try for a while with the derailed cooking that was all the rage in flash restaurants in the first half of the 1980s. But, as I say, the south-western accent is now pronounced. And the results are felicitous in the extreme.

It need hardly be pointed out that Mr Koffmann's is not that kind of clichéd south-western cooking which Paul Bocuse characterised as "can-opener cooking": the accent is not mummified.

Tante Claire is a very smooth, very urbane outfit with a pretty, Vogue Regency interior by David Collings. The cooking matches. It is, currently, beautifully balanced and as accomplished as any in Britain. I say "currently" because this has not, in my experience, been the most consistent of kitchens. But let that pass. A dinner last week was faultless. Every department of the kitchen manifested real virtuosity. The kind of peculiarly Gascon pasty that Mr Koffmann refers to in his book as "pâtis" crops up here and there — with poppy seeds, as a "parcel" for shredded duck confit, as a sort of superior cream puff in an apple dish. Pâtis has nothing to do with the anti-seed-flavoured aperitif but, probably, something to do with the kindred Moroccan pastry of a similar name. There is a persistently light touch with sauces, when they are used: the formula of a sauce with everything is not adhered to. Turbot, for instance, is served with *garbure*, the cabbage and onion soup that is a south-western staple, but which can rarely have been used in such a manner. It is, however, an unmitigated success — one of those rare fish and meat combinations that comes off. Scallops are done with squid ink and a sweet pepper purée. Duck is served in four ways: rare roast breast, wine-braised leg, stuffed neck, confit, as I said, in pastry with sweet, sweated onions. Each item is different from the



next, but there is sufficient carnal kinship for the whole to hold together. Woodcock is prepared in the classic manner, beak and all, its offal on a crouton. The numerous breads (shallot and bacon, tomato, olive, corn) are first rate. So, too, the cheeses, which are all French save an intruder from Scotland, Lanark Blue. Among the sweets is an all-apple number: sorbet, soufflé, *croustade*, gratin.

This was a marvellous meal. Nothing was redundant, nothing was lacking. It is very expensive — with a half of a meaty 1985 Châteaufort and two glasses of house wine the bill was £150. But, of course, it is quite possible to fork out such a sum at all sorts of inferior places. And the set lunch costs considerably less than half that sum. Not, it appears, that money is much of a problem for

this outfit's purities. It was full on a mid-week evening and certain of the tables were twice occupied. I trust that Mr Koffmann will find less to comfort him at Parc des Princes this afternoon.

**Tante Claire**  
68 Royal Hospital Road, SW3 (071-352 6045).  
Lunch and dinner Mon to Fri. £130 plus. Set lunch £70.

## JONATHAN MEADES'S RESTAURANT GUIDE

Marks — up to a maximum of ten — are awarded for cooking and although they are intended to reflect value for money they are not determined by this consideration alone: certain very costly restaurants are very good, certain very cheap ones are, too. All prices given are approximate — they are for a three-course meal for two, including modest wine and an aperitif. Dishes are mentioned only as an indication of the repertoire. Never be afraid to complain. Phone first. It is not only discourteous but illegal to dishonour bookings that goes for restaurants as well as customers. J.M.

### SCOTLAND

**Pierre Victoire**  
10 Victoria Street, Edinburgh 1 (031-225 1721)  
Chaotic, cramped, noisy, animated bistro in Edinburgh Old Town. The cooking, within its limitations, is mostly pretty good and is excellent value for money. Scallops with warm smoked salmon, halibut with mussels, pork with mango sauce. The service is liable to disruptions. £35. Lunch and dinner every day, except Sunday.

**The Champagne Inn**  
near Linlithgow, Lothian, (050-663 432/434 358)  
The ne plus ultra of the steak house. A very strange outfit indeed. The meat is "grown" by the owners but is, sometimes, carelessly cooked. The gravadax is the best in Lothian. The service is churlish, preposterous. A genuine oddity and one that is worth visiting if you can afford £100. Lunch Mon-Fri. Dinner Mon-Sat.

**Dunain Park**  
On A82, two miles south of Inverness (0463 230512)  
The atmosphere is that of a guest house that has come up in the world. The place is rather homely, the cooking is not — it attempts more than it can deliver and seems reluctant to keep things simple. When the sound ingredients are not muddled around, the results are pleasing. Excellent wines, good views of the river Ness and the Caledonian Canal. £50-£60. Dinner every day (bookings needed).

**The Old Monastery**  
Dyffryn, Buckie, Banffshire (0542 32660)  
More a re-building than a conversion, this spacious and handsome establishment looks down across Pict land to the Moray Firth. The cooking tends towards provincial over-elaboration, but is on target with the simpler dishes. The wine list is pretty good, the all-female service is charming, though tending towards the nicest kind of bossiness. £60. Lunch and dinner Tues-Sat.

**Tallich Lodge**  
Near Ballater, Grampian (03397 55406)  
Chunky hunk of baronial down the Dee valley from Balmoral (also closes for winter, reopening in March). No choice, or at least small choice menu, is stronger on meat than it is on sweets — which leave an awful lot to be desired. Mute and genteel punters don't exactly make it a fun-disco. Good whiskies. £50-£60.

**Inverloch Castle**  
Torquay, Fort William, Highland Region (0397 702177)  
An extraordinary Victorian time capsule which tries to be more country house than hotel (reopening March 2 after winter break). The service is quite something — a uniformed platoon greet diners who, inevitably, have difficulty negotiating the massed ranks. The interior of the muscular baronial pile is impressive — decades of paneling, hundreds of headstaps' heads.

overwrought furniture by Louis the Decorator and Louis the Highlander. The seating beneath Ben Nevis is also more than startling. The cooking is regulation issue luxury hotel stuff — all pretty well cooked but lacking any individual stamp: the meat, however, especially the beef, is first rate. £100. Lunch and dinner every day.

### AMERICAN COOKING

**Kenny's**  
70 Heath Street, NW3, (071-435 6972)  
Cajun restaurant with loud cajun music. Good cocktails, good beers, and some good cooking. The ubiquitous butter tastes like corn chips from a packet. There is little variety in the spicing, most dishes taste pretty much the same, i.e. hot and aggressive. £50. Lunch and dinner Mon-Sun. (There is also a branch in Chelsea, SW3).

**Parsens**  
311 Fulham Road, SW10, (071-352 0651)  
A survivor from the early 1970s which has become a reliable standby for locals. The hamburgers are very good indeed and the clam chowder is worthy of a "serious" restaurant. The much imitated decor is all white paint, potted palms and Victorian garden furniture. Good cheap wines and some unusual beers. £35. Lunch and dinner every day.

**Ed's Easy Diner**  
16 High Street, Hampstead, NW3, (071-431 1958)  
The phone number gets it right. This is a pastiche of anywhere in America in 1958 seen through the eyes of a video maker or ad director — chrome, plastic, Dion and Elvis. The burgers and milkshakes are all right but, no doubt, it is the feel rather than the food that is of moment. Ideal for 40-year-olds reliving their fantasy childhood. £20. (There are also branches in Old Compton Street, W1, King's Road, SW3, and Fulham Road.) Lunch and dinner Mon-Sun.

**The Hard Rock Cafe**  
160 Old Park Lane W1, (071-629 0382)  
A touristic institution. As well as a restaurant it is a monument to the early 1970s taste for anything to do with the 1950s and, further, it is a museum of rock and roll memorabilia — which means lots of guitars and photos. The basic cooking is hard on the digestion though easy on the pocket, given the vast quantities of food that are served. Burgers are disappointing but chili con carne and the steaks are all right. £45. All day every day.

**Los Andes**  
806 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29 (021-471 3577)  
Small South American diner with dishes from all over the subcontinent. The live music is a bore but some of the dishes are all right if rather crude: hot beef stew, hot lamb stew, empanadas stuffed with chicken or beef and raisins. Chicken with cream sauce. Mexican beer is a better bet than the rather dismal selection of wines. £23. Lunch Mon-Sat, dinner every day.

KIND FOOD: ALISON JOHNSON

## EC with egg on its face

Last summer, Asda trumpeted the fact that it was selling 15 per cent free-range, 60 per cent barn and only 25 per cent battery eggs. Three moderate cheers — but couldn't we reduce the last figure?

You may wonder what a barn egg is. To find out, I visited one of the "perchery" units that supplies Asda eggs. Though the birds live indoors, they have access to tiered perches, nest boxes and litter.

This unit was partitioned into sub-flocks of 1,000 birds to discourage aggression, with "only" 16 birds per square metre of floor space. Even so, they were ranged like crowds in a football stadium.

Do they become equally blood-thirsty? Unfortunately, yes. To discourage savagery, most perchery flocks are de-beaked, an operation now proved to cause long-lasting distress. They have litter provided, but not until well into lay, so that pullets learn to use the nest boxes rather than lay unprofitably dirty eggs in the litter.

This is a long way from an ideal situation, but it has to be said that it is preferable to a battery cage, which could not be worse for the naturally bustling hen.

At present it is impossible to tell whether eggs from "altern-

ative" or "colony" systems (free range, deep litter and barn/perchery) come from good or bad farms, even though these systems are inherently "kinder" than cages.

Unlike the situation for poultry, the term "free range" when applied to eggs is an EC statutory marketing term, and therefore not regulated primarily on welfare grounds, as shoppers might think. However, this may change.

Concerned to align marketing with welfare terms when the EC Directive on laying hens is reviewed later this year, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) recently submitted its report on colony systems to the government. Its main recommendations are for no more than seven hens per square metre of floor space, or around 15.5 (l) with tiered perches.

The FAWC has also recommended friable litter for scratching and dust-bathing, a ban on routine beak trimming by 1996, and "sufficient" popholes in free-range systems to allow all hens to use them.

Nothing too extreme here. But is there enough about what hens need? By the time the usual degree of compromise has entered into European discussions, will the poor old hen be any better off?

Some members of the FAWC have dissented from the majority recommendations in favour of more stringent ones, particularly on space allowance and litter, which if more generous would obviate de-beaking.

They feel that too much accommodation to the egg industry has overshadowed the needs of the hens, which could be disastrous, given the monumental slowness of changes in EC legislation, once in place.

Attempt too little and comfortable stagnation may ensue; too much and risk being laughed out of court. It's a question of strategy as much as of principle.

Unfortunately, it is never certain which tactic will succeed. And for farm animals, chances don't come often. If the EC welfare requirements for laying hens decided in 1992 are toothless, it may be years before they get another chance.

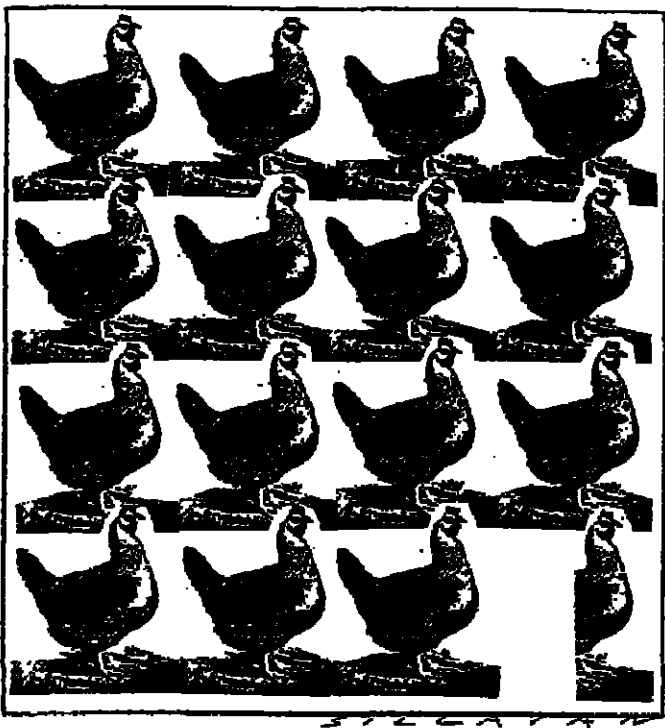
When we kept hens we used to quaver in sympathy with the ecstatic outcry of a proud matron as she rose from her sticky warm treasure in the nest box. As a result I prefer to dignify them by giving them the star part in a meal, not demoting them to thickening or raising.

My recipe for eggless chocolate cake was popular, so here is a similar one for gingerbread. It is excellent when served hot with Greek yoghurt or ice-cream, especially if you stir some sherry over it. It improves by being kept for a week, hence the name.

**Week ginger**  
224g self-raising flour  
2tsp cinnamon  
4tsp ground ginger  
112g margarine  
224g treacle  
56g muscovado sugar  
125ml milk  
2tsp bicarbonate of soda

Preheat oven to 150C, line tin 21cm square. Sieve first three ingredients. Heat everything else except soda until steaming. Beat in soda — batter will foam. Immediately fold in flour mixture, bake approximately 70 minutes.

● Report on the Welfare of Laying Hens in Colony Systems from FAWC (081-330 8032). Ask for the Minority Report as well.



## Play tick the toques

The French may not win many Olympic medals this week, but 50 top chefs will be going for gold in the Albertville big top

Whatever their fate on the slippery slopes, the French have got it thoroughly together as far as bread and circuses are concerned. For the duration of the Winter Olympics the best chefs in France are cooking in a big top.

The circus tent has been raised next to the town hall in Albertville. It is billed as *Le Restaurant le plus Toqué du Monde*.

A toque is a chef's hat, and the symbol of culinary excellence chosen by the *Guide Gault-Millau* to rival Michelin's rosettes. In idiomatic French, though, *toqué* also means crazy, which is a fair description for any restaurant which in 13 gala nights deploys the skills of 50 chefs mustering between them a total of no fewer than 103 Michelin stars.

This Olympiad of gastronomic endeavour has been conceived and co-ordinated by Marc Veyrat, a brilliant young chef whose magnificent restaurant at the Auberge de l'Éridan in Vevrier-du-Lac, just outside Geneva, is regarded as a prime candidate for promotion to three-star status when the *Michelin Guide* delivers its verdicts for 1992. He has already been nominated chef of the year by the *Guide Gault-Millau* and is one of the 15 chefs to whom they award their highest mark to date: 19.5 out of 20.

M. Veyrat is in the Albertville marquee each night, co-operating with an ever-changing, all-star brigade of chefs from the different regions of France, taking turns to present their regional specialties in a succession of menus surprises.

For the gala of gluttony M. Veyrat has recruited another six chefs who, like him, qualify for 19.5 ratings from *Gault-Millau*. They include Gérard Boyer from Reims and Jean Bardier from Tours. *Gault-Millau's* joint chefs of the year for 1992, who cooked together last Monday, presenting regional specialties of the Loire and Champagne.

Michel Trama from L'Aubergade at Puymirail will be among the *équipe* representing the southwest this Tuesday, and on Wednesday both Georges Blanc of La Mère Blanc at Vonnas and Marc



Cooking up a storm: the culinary all-star doyen, Paul Bocuse

Meneau of L'Espérance at Saint-Père-sous-Vézelay, will be stoking the stoves as representatives of Burgundy. On Thursday it is the turn of Jean-Pierre Haebler from L'Auberge de l'Ille at Illhaeusern in Alsace.

If it is Michelin stars one is hunting, rather than *Gault-Millau* toques, Burgundy's night on Wednesday offers a veritable galaxy.

Alongside Blanc and Meneau will be two more chefs with three Michelin stars apiece: Jacques Lameloise from Chagny and Michel Lorain from Joigny, and to bring the total tally that night to 14, the team is completed by Jean-Pierre Billoux, a two-star chef from Dijon.

Among the other three-star chefs on parade are Roger Vergé of Le Moulin de Mougins, the Pies from Valence, Emile Jung from Le Crocodile in Strasbourg, and the doyen of French grand event cooking, Paul Bocuse.

If you believe everything you hear about inter-kitchen rivalries,

## Crisp bit of rough

Knobbly celeriac is worth getting to know

CELERIAC is one of my favourite winter vegetables. It might look like a simple country bumpkin next to the cool and elegant fennel, the cosmopolitan green beans and mangetouts and the dandyl radish, but it is worth getting below that rough, tough, knobbly exterior to the dense, crisp, white flesh beneath, with a pronounced flavour of celery, its relative.

This large root vegetable is heavy, weighing at least a pound, and needs peeling before cooking. Because the white flesh oxidises rapidly on contact with air, it is best to quarter the root and rub the cut surfaces with lemon. Then peel each quarter and drop into a saucepan of water, to which you have added a little more lemon juice or vinegar.

At this time of year celeriac is a marvellous partner to dark game such as hare and venison. I dice it small and add to game soups and consommés. Larger chunks are cooked in game pies and casseroles. One of the best ways of using celeriac is to boil it with potatoes and plenty of peeled garlic cloves, then drain and mash with olive oil.

Celeriac can be used like potatoes in other ways: chips and crisps are particularly good; the crisps making a perfect canapé for a sliver of marinated salmon.

Fresh shellfish combines very well with the celeriac's earthy sweetness. I like to blanch strips of celeriac, then cut it into thin julienne strips before combining with freshly cooked mussels and a creamy mustard dressing. Celeriac on its own in such a dressing is the "celeri-rave" of the traditional French hors d'oeuvres trolley.

Although ideally suited to our climate, celeriac has features very little in traditional English cooking. Perhaps it will fare better in the modern kitchen. Arabella Boxer, in *A Visible Feast*, has a very good recipe for poached egg on a bed of celeriac purée topped with a sauce and finished under the grill. Peter Kromberg at the Intercontinental in London uses celeriac for "lasagne", taking very thin broad slices of celeriac, blanching them, then layering them with filling. Try a prawn, mussel or scallop lasagne with celeriac.

FRANCES BISSELL

ROBIN YOUNG



# Fruitful kitchen endeavours

The last thing readers of *The Times* want is a cookery column about marmalade. It has taken me a few years to come to this conclusion, even though it is the subject which generates by far the most correspondence, all of it written by experts. Who would have thought there were so many ways of making this preserve? Clearly no further guidance is required.

However, the new season's oranges from Seville and Valencia will not be ignored. Nor will the bowl of Sicilian citrons and lemons I brought back from a recent visit to Italy. I also returned with some wonderful recipes and have included some of them today, together with some fresh, citrusy sorbets and that teatime favourite, lemon curd (yes, it does use raw eggs, and yes, the ministry guidelines on their consumption still apply: if in doubt about using them, don't!).

Freshly made pasta is better for the first recipe than dried pasta, as the sauce is light in texture and the flavour very delicate. Franco Verucci, *sous chef* at the Cavaliere Hilton in Rome, cooked it for us and Emilio Licciardi, the *maitre d'hotel*, described in detail how to prepare it. Signor Verucci used tagliolini. Spaghetini, or angel hair, can also be used. As with all pasta dishes, it is important to have the serving plates very hot.

**Tagliolini al limone**  
(pasta with lemon sauce)  
(serves 4)  
1lb/455g fresh or dried pasta  
2 large lemons with good skins  
2oz/60g unsalted butter  
3-4oz/85-110ml single, double or whipping cream  
white pepper

Peel off the zest of one lemon, put it in a frying pan with the butter and set over a low heat. Let it infuse for five to ten minutes, without the butter burning. Remove the zest. Add the cream, grate in the rest of the second lemon and let this cook until you have a well-flavoured cream. Season with white pepper. Cook the pasta as appropriate, drain it, but not too thoroughly, and mix with the sauce. Stir in the lemon juice to taste (probably the juice of at least one lemon) and serve immediately. This is a rich, creamy dish, despite the image of something tangy and astringent created by its name. If your pasta is particularly absorbent, you may



**Oranges and lemons give dishes**

**fresh zest says**

**Frances Bissell,**

**The Times cook**

well need to stir in more like 4pt/140ml of cream. Above all, the pasta should not be sticky in the sauce.

The next recipe can be adapted to most fish fillets: those taken from plaice, sole, brill and turbot will generally cook more quickly than those taken from round fish. It is based on *sopita al arancia*, which was on the New Year's day menu at Ristorante Fini in Modena. I have cooked several versions at home, pan-frying pieces taken from a large fresh cod fillet and letting them cook in their own juices after brushing them with orange juice and olive oil.

I have cooked several versions at home, pan-frying pieces taken from a large fresh cod fillet and letting them cook in their own juices after brushing them with orange juice and olive oil. The oranges I like best for this recipe are navel oranges and the blood oranges. If you can get lines with good skins, try using them instead. If I can get it, red mullet is my favourite fish for this recipe, provided it is big enough. One weighing 1lb, or just over, will feed two. Have it scaled and filleted. Use the head and bones for a stock, made by simmering in 1pt/570 ml water for 20-25 minutes, with a bay leaf, a celery stalk top and, if you have it, a slice of fresh ginger. Strain through a very fine sieve and reduce to 4pt/140ml. Store, or freeze, half of it for another time.

**Pesce al arancia**  
(fish with orange sauce)  
(serves 2)  
2 red mullet fillets  
2-3tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 navel orange  
sea salt  
freshly ground black pepper  
4pt/140ml fish stock

Make sure there are no scales sticking to the skin and remove any larger bones that might come out easily. Brush the fillets on both sides with olive oil. Peel off two or three broad strips of zest and grate the rest over the fish. Squeeze on some of the juice. Season it lightly and leave it while you cut the zest into long, thin curls. Simmer them in the stock. Heat a well-seasoned or non-stick frying-pan over a moderate heat and place the fish fillets, skin-side down, in the pan. Cover with a lid, and "sweat" the fish for about eight minutes, depending on the thickness. Transfer the fish to warm plates and put the curls of orange zest on it. Pour the stock into the frying-pan, add a little more orange juice and boil until reduced to a few tablespoons. Whisk in the remaining olive oil, bring to the boil and serve the sauce with the fish.

**Orange sorbet**  
(serves 6)  
juice of half a lemon  
1pt/570ml freshly squeezed orange juice  
icing sugar to taste (see note below)

Mix all the ingredients, stirring until the icing sugar has dissolved. Freeze in a sorbetiere or ice-cream maker, according to the manufacturer's instructions. The mixture can also be frozen in a freezer container and should be stirred from time to time as it is freezing to keep as even a texture as possible.

**Variations:**  
**Blood orange sorbet:** Freshly squeezed blood oranges, a teaspoon or two of orange flower water, sweetened to taste.  
**Lemon and thyme sorbet:** Freshly squeezed lemon juice, lemon thyme, spring water and icing sugar to taste. Take a teaspoon of fresh lemon thyme leaves, pound them in a mortar with a little of the sugar and stir into the juice before mixing with spring water and the rest of the sugar and freezing it.

**Grapefruit and mint sorbet:** As above, pounding fresh mint leaves into some of the icing sugar before mixing into the liquid.  
**Notes on sorbet-making:** Mixing half juice and half champagne or sparkling wine creates a very good sorbet. Some spirits and liqueurs go very well with sorbets, including vodka or gin with the grapefruit and lemon sorbets. I also like Nolly Prar with these two and a spot of Campari in orange sorbets, but too much alcohol will prevent

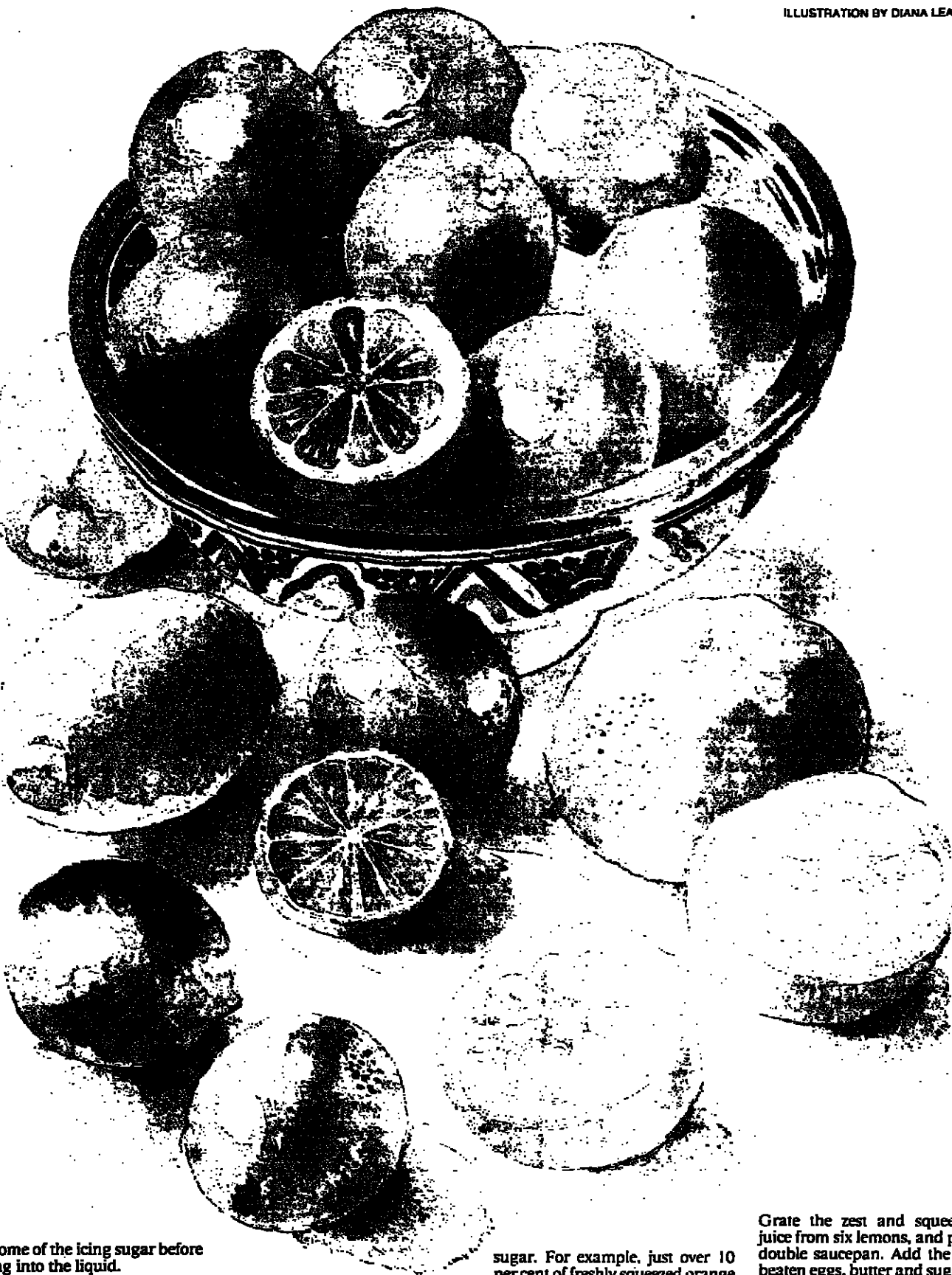


ILLUSTRATION BY DIANA LEADBETTER

sugar. For example, just over 10 per cent of freshly squeezed orange juice is sugar.

**Lemon curd**  
(This recipe uses uncooked eggs)  
4 large lemons with good skins  
8 egg yolks, or 4 whole eggs  
5oz/140g unsalted butter, cut into small cubes  
12oz/340g caster sugar

Grate the zest and squeeze the juice from six lemons, and put in a double saucepan. Add the lightly beaten eggs, butter and sugar. Stir until the sugar has dissolved. Continue cooking and stir until the mixture thickens. Put in small, clean, dry jars, which you have warmed in the oven. Cover immediately. Label, refrigerate and use within three to four weeks.

Seville oranges can also be used to make a very well-flavoured curd. **Next week: More food from Italy.**

## Getting plastered on corn

**Jane MacQuitty unravels the ancient secrets of frontier craft that founded America's whiskey industry**

Our mash or straight, Bourbon or Tennessee? Confused? I know I am. What is it with these American whiskey producers? Why can't they just sort out their whiskey terminology like we have done?

There are six main different types of American whiskey, although only two are widely available in Britain.

Not surprisingly, the first frontier spirit was made from corn, the easiest crop to grow in America. The earliest distillation attempts by Scots and Irish immigrants who brought their skills with them from the old country produced a coarse, clear spirit that earned its nickname of reegee. It must have tasted like poteen.

Today rough and ready corn whiskey, aged in uncharred oak casks, is still a rural American spirit, but it is now hard to find in the US. Superior rye whiskey was also part of the early settlers' repertoire and it is still possible to buy good rye in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Modern whiskeys in the US are bourbon, which accounts for one-third of all whiskey produced, and the bourbon-style Tennessee whiskey. Both developed from the corn and rye east-coast original. Others are bland, blended whiskeys lightened up by heavy doses of neutral spirit, produced by Seagram's and Hiram Walker among others. Ignore both these and the light whiskeys which are, as the name suggests, the lightest and blandest in flavour of all.

American whiskey may be an obscure choice, but the world is beginning to get a taste for it. With exports trebled in recent years and the domestic market halved, there are plenty of interested American whiskey producers who will work hard to ensure this trend continues.

Japan is the biggest importer of American whiskeys. Australia the second. Europe is catching up: in the UK we drink 145,000 cases a year of the stuff. So it is high time we knew what we were drinking.

Bourbon was born in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in the late 18th century. According to bourbon makers, the Rev Elijah Craig was the first person to realise that a corn whiskey made with the addition of rye and a little malted



Two fingers: a double measure of bourbon on the rocks

### TOP TIMES BOURBONS

● **Maker's Mark** Tesco £18.95, Oddbins £18.99, Selfridges £19.69

Made by the Samuels at their small, family-run distillery in the heart of Kentucky, Maker's Mark is the priciest brand available here and the one with the most prestige. What separates this bourbon from the rest is the softness and smoothness of its rich oak, vanilla and raisin-like caramel flavours. A bourbon star.

● **George Dickel** Oddbins £15.99

Drier and woodier in style than the above, as Tennessee whiskeys often are, and blessed with a pleasant, fruity taste.

● **No.1 Bourbon Street** Bourbon Oddbins £14.99

Bourbon Street's earthy pungency is lightened by lots of fine, gingery spice and vanilla flavours.

● **Wild Turkey 101** Oddbins and Tesco £17.29, Asda £17.49

At 50.5 per cent proof, instead of 40 like other bourbons, Wild Turkey's superior, eight-year-old version boasts an unusual, earthy, wet leaves-like flavour. Distinctive.

● **Four Roses** Bourbon Oddbins £11.99

A good, value-for-money, introductory bourbon whose sweet, simple vanilla flavours are easy to enjoy.

minimum of two years in airy rack houses. The barrels expand and contract with the temperature, which forces the spirit in and out of the barrel's caramelised layer of charred wood, allowing it to soften and pick up colour and flavour.

Unlike whiskey matured in used casks, bourbon matured in new wood cannot be aged for much longer than eight years, otherwise an excessively woody spirit would result.

Bourbon also differs from whiskey in that it is distilled in tall, continuous stills to a lower alcoholic strength than scotch whiskey, giving it a more robust, earthy flavour. Its other, highly individual whiskey attribute is that each fermenting batch of sour mash is seeded with the same strain of yeast as a previous batch, which ensures continuity of style and flavour.

Tennessee whiskey is made in exactly the same way as bourbon, but the raw spirit is also filtered very slowly through a deep layer of sugar maple charcoal before it is aged in charred barrels.

Bourbon experts are divided as to how great a difference this makes to the end result, but corn is a particularly sweet-tasting grain, and the only two brands of Tennessee whiskey available, Jack Daniel's and George Dickel, do seem to taste drier and less heavily flavoured as a result.

Bourbon, at first, is a shock and best drunk neat in a small glass, as the Americans do. This is a big, assertive, full-flavoured spirit reeking of vanilla, oak, caramel and a fruity sweetness that stems from the corn and the charring. It is a pungent, not a polished spirit like scotch, and is at its best, I feel, drunk, not sipped.

Cutting bourbon 50-50 with a good, still bottled water such as Evian aids appreciation, which is an acquired, not an immediate art.

Jack Daniel's Tennessee whiskey is the biggest-selling bourbon-style brand in the UK, followed by Jim Beam bourbon. Together they comprise 90 per cent of the market. But given that they cost £15 plus, I would trade straight up to one of the superior bottles listed left.

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# Putting the squeeze on fruit

Francesca Greenoak has good news and bad news from Brussels for gardeners

Shudders of apprehension have been running through the horticultural community in Britain following news that the European Commission is establishing new ground rules for the raising and selling of plants.

Many of us, remembering the heavy-handed legislation of the 1970s which eliminated a number of worthwhile vegetables from the seed catalogues, were anxious about the same thing happening to flowering plants, prejudicing the future of small nurseries.

Now it seems we were looking in the wrong direction. While the EC proposals on ornamental plants are less drastic than was rumoured, the situation for fruit has suddenly become more serious. A last-minute bid was made by the EC Council Working Group, reintroducing the idea of a register of approved varieties of fruit plants. Only registered varieties will qualify for the three top-grade marketing categories, which could severely inhibit the fruit nurseries now developing a range of first-class local and historic fruit.

The agriculture ministry (Maff) failed a few days ago to prevent the approval of the draft proposals, so the situation is now very threatening; the best hope is that Maff will find some way to modify their efforts.

There is, however, good news on ornamental plants. Having consulted farmers, large nursery firms, and a separate lobby of small nursery firms and plant societies acting together under the auspices of the RHS, Maff has had considerable impact on the Brussels discussions. Britain has more at stake than other European nations because of its wealth of small nurseries and the wider range of plants available, but fears that less common plants would be priced out of the market by EC bureaucracy seem to be allayed.

Essentially, the proposals deal with plant health and marketing within the EC, replacing the complicated network of different phyto-

sanitary laws and marketing regulations of the member states. At best, they could open up opportunities to export plants effectively and safely. This could mean better choice as new garden plants find their way more quickly to Britain.

The legislation will take the form of a directive, which permits flexibility of interpretation within member countries. Maff says: "The directive should have little or no impact on amateur, charitable and small local producers", and has given its assurance that costs and administration will be kept to a minimum.

When these new rules come into effect in 1993 we should still be able to buy popular lines at garden centres and supermarkets, uncommon plants from specialist nurseries, and good home-raised plants at charity stalls and on garden visits. The difference will be that most nurseries will have to be registered, and "plant passports" detailing the provenance of specified plants to be traced back to the grower in the event of serious disease or pests being discovered.

Growers who produce plants which fall into a category defined as being of "major economic importance", which includes roses, lilies, gerbera, narcissus, ornamental apples and pears (though not necessarily all the kinds of species or cultivars included in these general, require additional accreditation, which should ensure basic standards of plant health for customers.

Registered nurseries should be able to carry out the accreditation, evidence of it being shown on the label-passport. Amateurs and small growers selling only in their local area will be exempt.

Much of the misunderstanding and anxiety about this legislation was due to the aggressive nature of the early proposals, now much ameliorated. There are still matters of detail and definition to be worked out, such as mail order, but there seems, at present, no cause for panic on ornamental plants.



Healthy narcissus and garden daffodils are among the plants likely to be affected by the new rules

## BEST BUY

FEBRUARY is the month of the naturalised common snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), growing in white drifts in woodlands and grass. They can be introduced to the garden as bulbs in autumn, or over the next few weeks as plants. Look out for variations such as the elegant *Magnet*, *Scharlocki* with overhanging, leaf-like ears, tall *Sam Arnott*, or the stocky double *farm Flow Pleno*. The named varieties and hybrids are usually better grown in beds. Ensure the ground contains plenty of humus-rich organic matter to help retain moisture.



Nodding heads of snowdrops

## WEEKEND TIPS

- Sow greenhouse tomatoes at 68°F/20°C, reducing to 55°F/13°C when seedlings are showing.
- Prepare the ground for sowing a new lawn, digging it over, levelling and firming — and removing all weeds.
- Sow sweet peas in deep seed trays or individual pots.
- Continue to plant fruit trees and bushes.
- Divide up and replant crowded clumps of snowdrops after flowering but while the leaves are still green.

## MY PERFECT WEEKEND

We ask people in the public eye to reveal the private fantasies that would turn a weekend into 48 hours of pure magic

KIT HESKETH HARVEY

Entertainer

Where would you go? When you're travelling all over the place for most of the time, the treat is to stay at home. So I'd not budge from Norfolk.

How do you get there? Up the M11, in less than two hours. No airports. Bliss.

Where would you stay? In bed, mostly. Vita Sackville-West said that there is no greater pleasure than lying on linen sheets, listening to wood pigeons. I suspect she's right.

Who would be your perfect companion? Norfolk is already crammed with perfect — because like-minded — companions: Stephen Fry, David Cholmondeley — as Byronic as his courtesy title, the Earl of Rocksavage, could lead anybody to hope — and the Queen.

What essential piece of clothing would you take? Rough, army-surplus sort of thermals, perfect for penitential mass at Walsingham.

Which medicines? None. Norfolk is its own tonic.

What would you have to eat? Brown shrimps, fished by our children on hot afternoons at Holkham, or netted on moonlit August nights. Samphire, picked on the marshes. Big, slippery jack mushrooms from Thetford forest. French cheeses from Swaffham market.

What would you take to read? Penguin whodunits, set in Neverland English recories — if I can find any I've not already read.

What would you listen to? Our old drawing-room piano, played after Saturday dinner by our neighbour, the young composer James McConnell. I hope he'd play Schumann, who was our mutual teacher, and the only living genius I've met.

What would you watch on television? Television is for weekdays. But I do love watching the My Little Pony advertisements with the children, first thing.

What film would you watch? The new Merchant-Ivory *Howards End*, of which I've just had



a sneak preview. It's a masterpiece. Vanessa Redgrave blisters the celluloid.

Would you play any sport? I'd shoot a pheasant, just enough for the pot. I reckon that a pheasant, put down as a chick, has a better life and a cleaner death than a lump of pre-basted styrofoam from a supermarket.

What luxury would you take? *Hellot!* magazine.

What piece of art would you like to have there? We've a ramshackle beach-hut at Hunstanton which, being west-facing, gets acid house sunsets.

Who would be your least welcome guest? A red-breasted nuthatch. We took a friend to Holkham, promising unspoilt seclusion. Sadly, that morning a rare nuthatch had the same idea. By the afternoon, 5,000 twitchers had arrived, cameras positioned like heavy artillery, from as far away as Oslo and Merthyr Tydfil.

What three things would you leave behind? The election, the election, the election.

What would you like to find when you got home? That some Caliban had lit the fire and left a full log-basket.

Interview by Rosanna Greenstreet

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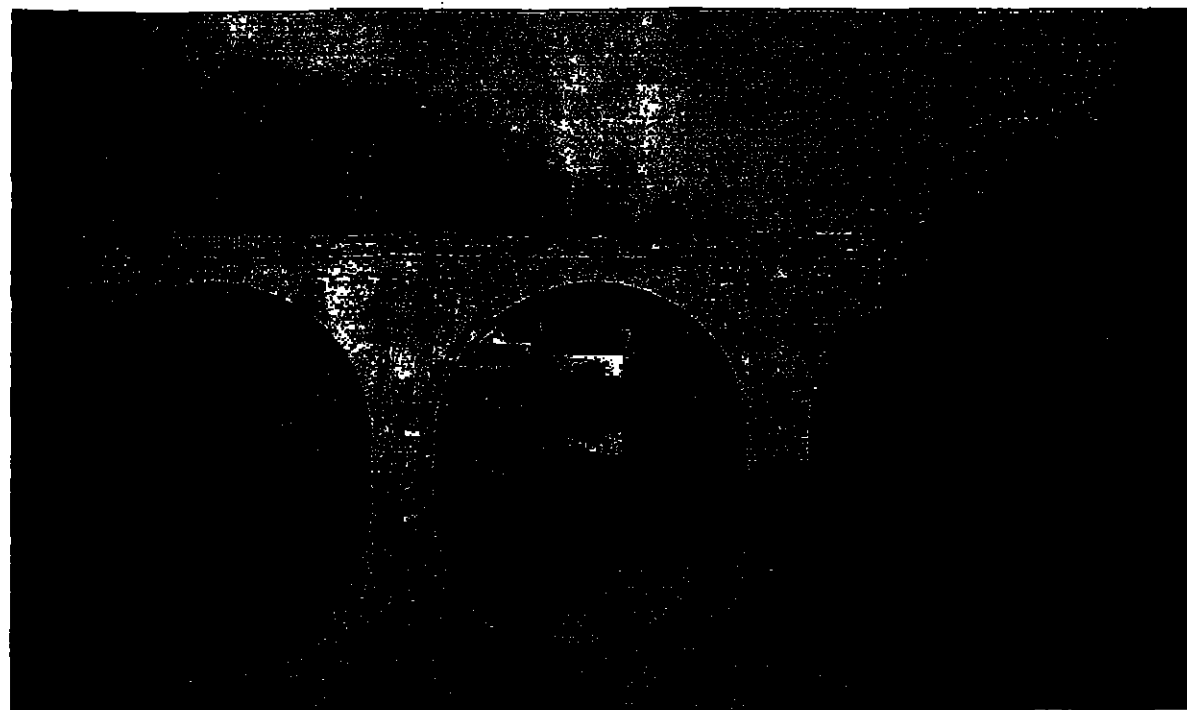
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## WHERE TO WALK



Artist's inspiration: the 18th-century Prebends Bridge below the cathedral, a scene painted by Turner in 1834

This is a circular walk beginning and ending at the cathedral, encompassing parts of the old city, riverbank and country woodland, and offering superb vistas of cathedral and castle from a distance.

From the cathedral north door, cross Palace Green and descend the steep cobbles of Owengate, with its 15th-century timber-framed house, and Saddler Street, site of the city's oldest surviving shopfront at no. 43. Turn right to cross the 12th-century Elvet Bridge. Take the path behind the Swan and Three Cypriets pub, and follow the river along Elvet Waterside and out of the city by the university playing fields, once a racecourse. Old Durham rises majestically behind. Follow the river for about three-quarters of a mile. At the rear of the crested cricket pavilion, turn left along a metalled lane, then immediately right down a track by a wire fence. This is a delightful riverside path under the wooded bluff of Maiden Castle, an Iron Age fort.

Just before a modern footbridge, follow the path to the right and cross the road with care. Continue on the path directly opposite which skirts Great High Wood. After three-quarters of a mile, look for a wooden bench and turn left down a waymarked footpath, signposted Houghall Discovery Trail, through a meadow. At the postbox by Houghall Farm turn right up a marked path, which follows the embankment of an old wagon-way that once brought coal into Durham.

At the foot of the hill turn right into the wood and follow obvious paths which climb the bank on to the metalled Hollingside Lane, near the university's botanic gardens. A little further along the lane turn right down a gated track by the pyramid-shaped Fountains Hall, keeping right of the modern Mount Joy research centre.



Colin Wilbourn's curious 'trees'

At the road junction, follow the track down to Mount Joy Farm, where cathedral and castle again appear in splendour on the skyline.

Turn left at the farm down to the main road, and follow the walled path directly opposite, with the cathedral ahead and above. Cross another road opposite the 12th-century St Oswald's church, with its fine Norman

nave. Go through the churchyard and follow the path which leads leftwards down into the thickly wooded Wear gorge, following the river bank to the beautiful 18th-century Prebends Bridge with the cathedral towering above, painted by Turner in 1834.

Cross the bridge, with lines from Walter Scott set in the wall, and notice, to the right, an ingenious *trompe l'oeil* which appears as a clump of dead elm trunks but is in fact a curious sculpture (1989) by Colin Wilbourn. Take the left-hand path that climbs the hill directly beneath the cathedral's Galilee chapel. Turn right to regain Palace Green.

• About five miles. Hilly in parts; woodland paths may be muddy after rain. Palace Green is at 273423 on OS Landranger series 88 (Tyneside and Durham). More detail on OS Pathfinder series 572 (Durham). Detailed city walks leaflets from tourist information office, Market Place (091-384 3720).



## BEST OF BRITAIN

## DURHAM

Alan Hamilton salutes the unknown architects of Durham cathedral, nearing its 900th birthday

Here is a tempting but sadly improbable thought. A group of avant-garde, 12th-century architects, dismissive of calls to build by traditional methods and to a human scale, decide to throw up something truly enormous and out of all proportion to people, a veritable Canary Wharf of a creation that can be seen for miles sprouting from a high tract of hitherto undeveloped green belt land. Moreover, they will construct it by dangerously daring and wholly untried principles.

But, being a canny lot, they think they will execute their grandiose scheme somewhere a bit out of the way, on the very edge of the civilised world — whence the authorities are pliable on the matter of planning consent and building regulations. Where, also, if their bold new construction theories happen to prove as unsound as the flats of Roman Point, there will be nobody to witness the failure except the local rude Anglo-Saxon peasantry.

They need not have worried. Durham Cathedral, give or take an occasional crack and collapse over the centuries, still stands, and next year celebrates its 900th birthday as one of the keystones of European architecture: the last great shrine to a Saxon saint, the finest Romanesque church in Europe, and the first to employ the Gothic engineering which holds up all subsequent medieval cathedrals.

Durham was built on motives far greater than the mere self-aggrandisement of its anonymous architects.

To Sir Walter Scott it was "half church of God, half castle

against the Scot": an immense declaration of Christian faith by a people barely two generations out of barbarism, and an intimidating statement that the Norman conquest had reached Northumbria, with every intention of staying.

Pilgrims on their way to do homage to Cuthbert, the most revered saint of the north country, must have had their breath taken away as they breasted the hill of Mount Joy to the south (see accompanying walk) to be confronted with their first sight of by far the largest man-made object they would ever have seen. Durham's majesty arises from its position as much as its size, and the true unsung heroine of this glorious creation is an unknown millmaid.

Legend, commemorated by a carving on the cathedral's north front, tells of the band of monks who fled with the coffin of their blessed Cuthbert to escape the Danish raids on Lindisfarne.

and wandered many a year in search of a permanent resting place. The young woman broke off her milking to lead them to a high and secret wooded bluff above a loop in the River Wear.

Pevsner, in his *Buildings of England*, considers three of the outstanding architectural experiences of Europe to be Prague, Avignon and Durham, and the finest of these, because it springs from woods and living rock, to be Durham.

Railway passengers on their way to Newcastle know it well: as the train follows a wide loop around Durham city, the cathedral appears to be constantly turning in an effort to present its

of the pointed arch, the flying buttress, and high stone vaulting, when all church roofs before were of wood.

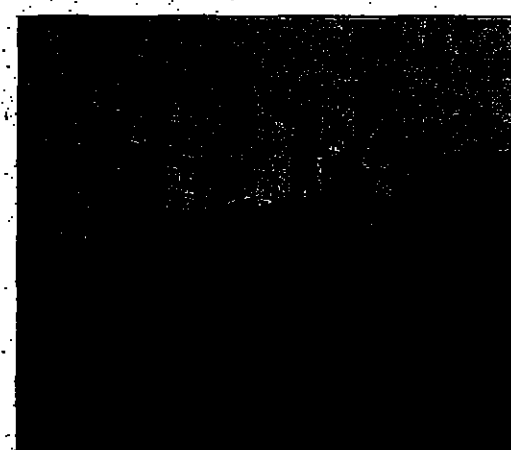
"This was not designed by a computer, it must have been conceived in someone's mind's eye. And buildings like this were not put up by slaves; they were erected by craftsmen who believed in what they were doing. The Normans had a tremendous sense of the grandeur and majesty of God. Yet Durham, although Christian, has some of the power and vigour of barbarism about it."

Alec Clifton-Taylor, the historian and critic, regarded the moment of entering Durham cathedral as "an architectural experience never to be forgotten: one of the greatest that England has to offer."

Even by large cathedral standards, it is stunning, not only because of its scale and the welcoming warmth of its ancient sandstone, but because of its complete harmony. One of the least altered of all our cathedrals, it was substantially completed and stone-vaulted throughout in only 40 years, a prodigious achievement.

Only three later additions are of significance: the great central lantern tower; the Galilee chapel containing the tomb of the Venerable Bede (a piece of later building, which, unfortunately, deprives Durham of a traditionally majestic west front); and the Chapel of the Nine Altars at the east end, an extension as exuberantly early English Gothic as the main building is Romanesque.

The speed with which the main fabric was put up suggests that the builders were constantly looking over their shoulders



Cathedral splendour outside (top) and nave

lest the marauding Scots sweep down from the Tweed to desecrate their work before it was finished.

During a brief and rare period of border peace, the first bishop assiduously invited King Malcolm of Scotland to the laying of the foundation stone in 1093, reminding him no doubt that the blessed Cuthbert would have been an Edinburgh boy, had that city been built in his youth.

Durham subsequently remained the only border stronghold never to fall to Scottish invaders, ruled as it was by the prince bishops: powerful victors who wielded temporal as well as spiritual power over the northeast on behalf of their distant king.

They lived in high style in the adjoining castle, each adding his arms to the exterior walls and altering the building to his own whim, with the result that it is now a mighty jumble of styles.

Model site: Durham ca



Bargain hunters: shoppe

a warren of a residence university students.

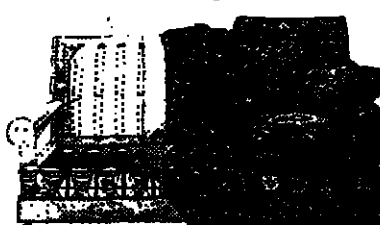
The 13th-century banquet hall, marginally less grand than that of Christ Church, Ox, remains largely intact, with the portraits of deans dons. But the castle's doubted gem is a tiny virtually untouched 12th tury Norman chapel within its bowels, its nan patterned pink and yellow stone and its two tiny windows giving the appea of a catacomb hewn from rock, rather than a sum built on top of an English.

The chapel is mediocrit on the brightest of days, cathedral across Palace G on the other hand, ha welcomes the sun to warm i stone pillars.

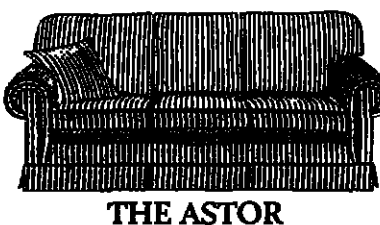
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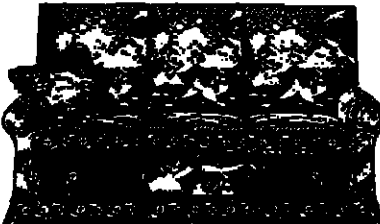
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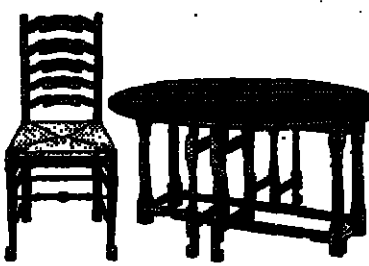
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## Rooms vacant - bring your own

Are hotels moving with the times - the leanest, toughest times in living memory? Many have gone into receivership in the past year, yet you will often see little outward sign of the anxiety behind the scenes. Nothing seems to have changed apart from the paucity of fellow guests. Staff may have been laid off, and there could be some discreet cost-cutting in the kitchens - an ingredient not quite what it says on the menu - but otherwise it's business very much as usual.

In your bathroom you will still find plenty of freebies, and in the smarter establishments, hotel-headed notepaper and envelopes, a profusion of magazines, complimentary sherry and bowls of fruit. There may also be room-tidying while one is dining, a daily set of fresh towels, a chocolate on the pillow and the nightie laid out "waisted" on the bed.

In the dining-room some set menus are grotesquely long. You may still be served one or two *amuse-gueules* before the

Instead of showering guests with ever more lavish freebies, perhaps hotels should cut costs and prices

meal proper, and a plate of friandises at the end - I've even come across a restaurant that serves three little appetisers at the start of a *grande bouffe* as well as a vast platter of petit-fours at the end.

Meanwhile London's newest, most glamorous, most flagrantly expensive hotel, The Lanesborough on Hyde Park Corner, which opened its doors just over a month ago, is playing "we can go one better" up to the hilt. If you have booked a suite - and half the 95 rooms are suites - the hotel will send a limo to collect you at the airport; but all guests, in suites or not, can order a limo to take them anywhere in London within a five-mile radius. If you occupy the Royal Suite (£2,500 a night, excluding VAT) a limo and chauffeur are at your call at all hours. No carafes of sherry at the Lanesborough: complimen-

tary decanters of Scotch, gin and sherry are provided for all. Guests have their own butler; every room has its own telephone and fax number, and guests are given on arrival a little leather pouch with visiting cards already printed with their name and private numbers. And of course there are CD stereo systems, video-cassette players, briefcase-sized safes, air-conditioning and other everyday five-star facilities.

At a time when so many hotels are pricing themselves out of the market, these attempts to entice more custom often appear desperately self-defeating. Hotels should be seeking ways to offer better value by charging less, not by constantly piling on more pampering inducements. Shops have sales. Airlines have always been ready to lower their tariffs in season and out to attract more travellers. But hotels, ex-

cept in the cities, have been strangely reluctant to discount openly. Bargain weekends are acceptable, and most do have a special corporate rate. Not much else. Why don't they borrow the stand-by idea from airlines and theatres and offer their rooms at half price if it still has vacancies after 6p? No one, as far as I know, has tried this in the UK, though has been practised successfully on the Continent.

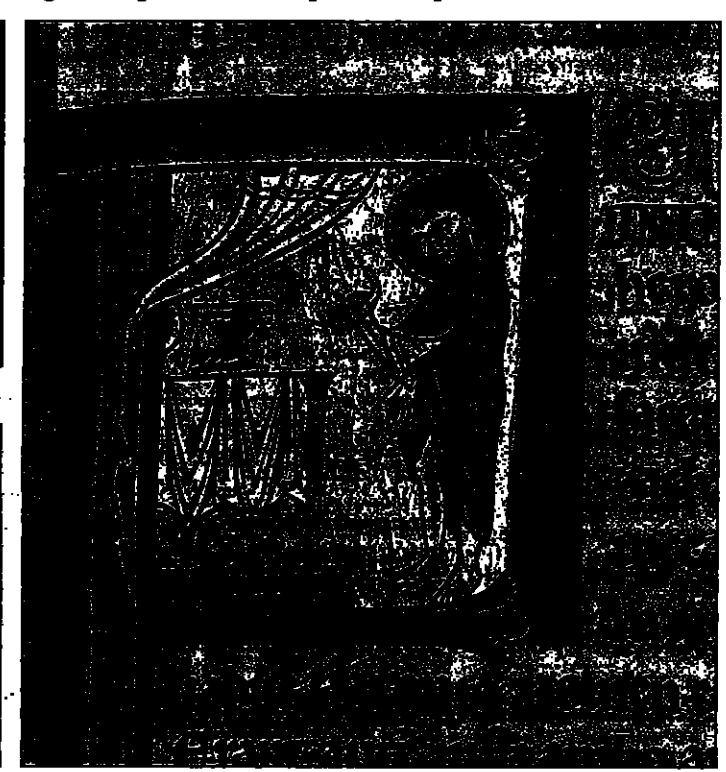
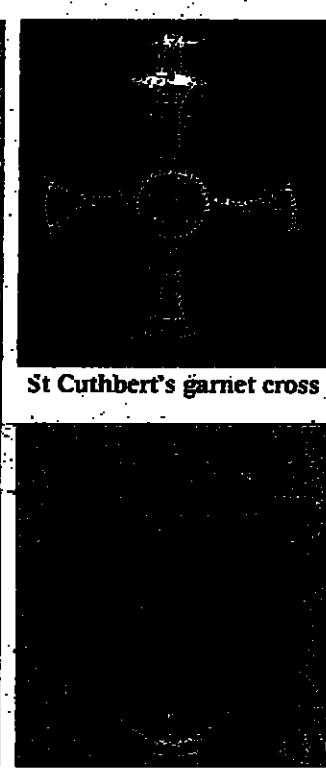
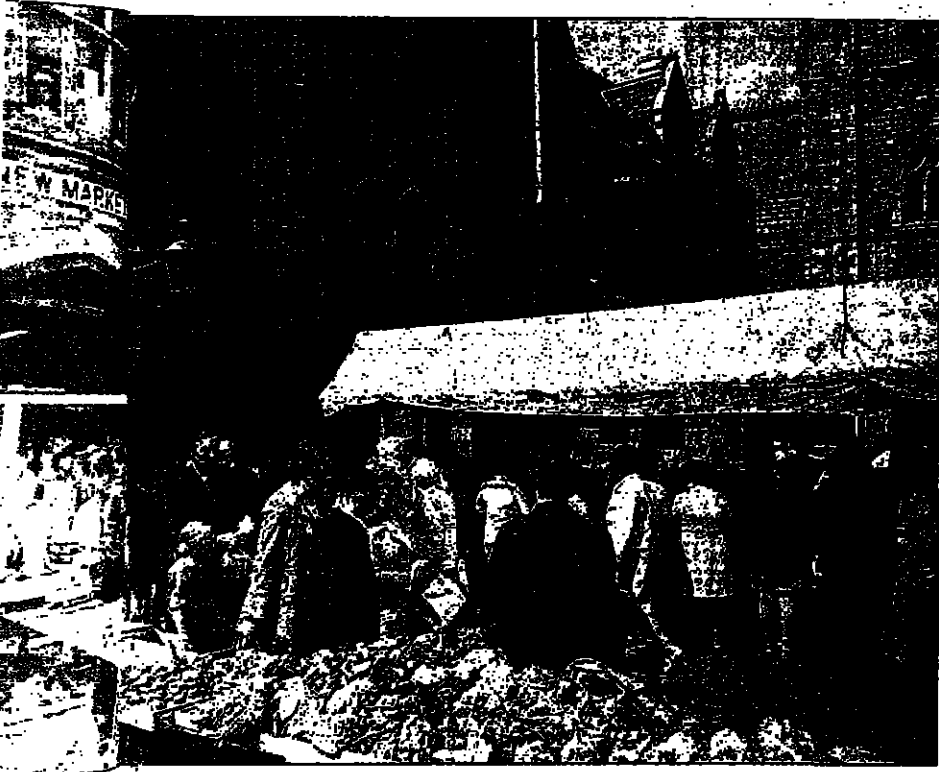
Hotels are way behind restaurant trade in recognising the growing demand for shorter, lighter meals, using extravagant as well as healthy ingredients. "I'd just like starter please" is a sentence no one should be embarrassed to utter. And while there are many who relish the frills of expensive hotels, there are still who feel uncomfortable as conspicuous consumption



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROS DRINKWATER



rising behind Framwell Gate bridge, the last great shrine to a Saxon saint, and a miracle of the Gothic engineering which holds up all subsequent medieval cathedrals



g the market. Durham's medieval street plan is intact, but not its architecture Knock here for sanctuary Golden prose: fragment from a 12th-century illuminated Bible

one hopes, turning it into some gimmicky period-piece stage set. The present-day cathedral authorities acknowledge that, as the 20th century cannot match the genius of the original builders, its best contribution is to light their work properly.

Down in the dim light of the Treasury beneath the monks' dormitory, Durham displays some of its dazzling artefacts. But the glittering richness of the cathedral plate pales beside the early gold and silver-bound Bibles, their parchment pages alive with the endless years of monastic labour that produced the Celtic beauty of illuminated gospels.

Here, too, are Cuthbert's 7th-century gold and garnet pectoral cross, splendid gold-embroidered maniple from his tomb, and the oaken remains of his much-disturbed coffin.

Cuthbert's great draw as a

saint was that every time the monks lifted the lid to gaze upon his earthly remains, they miraculously stayed in a perfect state of preservation: they even cut his fingernails regularly with a pair of silver scissors. He was inspected in 1104, as he was being moved to his final rest in the new cathedral, and despite being well over 400 years old he still looked in good condition. When a group of sceptical academics and clerics, unable to contain their curiosity at the legend any longer, opened the tomb in 1827 they found to their dismay, but not entirely to their surprise, that Cuthbert had finally become a pile of bones.

While Cuthbert has decayed, his mighty shrine still stands after more than 30 generations. That the stones breathe such age as no living being may aspire to is a powerful element in its appeal.

Below the cathedral, Durham

city retains its winding, hilly, medieval street plan, but little of its medieval domestic architecture. It is a tightly-built place, described by Defoe as "a little compact neatly contriv'd city". There will be much celebration of Durham's 900th next year, although the dean and chapter are anxious to present their cathedral as a living thing and not an ancient relic. But I can think of no greater draw than that they borrow back the Lindisfarne Gospels, as they did several years ago, from the British Library, and mount another display of that exquisite Celtic art that even the conquering Normans found far too beautiful to destroy.

● Durham Cathedral is open daily, 7.15am-6pm, admission free. Treasury, 10am-4.30pm (2-4.30pm Sun), 60p, child 10p. Castle interior by guided tour only; Mon, Wed, Sat, 2-4.30pm in winter, £1.30, child 50p. Enquiries: 091-374 3800.

★ WHERE TO STAY ★



Cromwell was (possibly) here: inside the Royal County Hotel

Carved from a row of Jacobean town houses, and now much extended, the Royal County Hotel is the place to stay in Durham. Five minutes steeply downhill from the cathedral, it commands excellent views of Old Durham from its riverside position. Charles I and Cromwell may have stayed here; Edward VII certainly did, his visit earning the regal prefix. Four-star, very central and elegantly comfortable, the hotel still retains its historic oak staircase brought from Loch Leven castle, where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned. Much more recent is the hotel's leisure club. Much the best hotel in the area, the Royal County offers weekend breaks from £85 per person for two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast (091-386 6821).

Equally central, but slightly more functional, is the Three Tuns Hotel, owned like the Royal County by Vaux, the Sunderland brewery group. This former 16th-century

coaching inn offers weekend breaks on a par with its grander sister round the corner (091-386 4326).

Something of a curiosity is Lumley Castle, six miles north of Durham near Chester-le-Street. A 14th-century pile with an extraordinary interior stuffed with an eclectic collection of antiques and bric-a-brac, reminiscent of an Arabian bazaar. Single rooms from £55, but special breaks available (091-389 1111).

Very central, but cheaper, is the Georgian Town House in Crossgate, a tall terrace building in a cobbled street close to the cathedral. Proprietor Janet Weil gives it a personal touch, with pretty patterned wallpaper and fabrics, and plenty of flowers. B&B from about £35 (091-386 8070).

Budget travellers are recommended to Mrs Williams's Castle View Guest House, an 18th-century listed building in Crossgate, with B&B from about £20 (091-386 8852).

★ WHERE TO EAT ★

● Durham is a university city, well served by cheap and cheerful Italian restaurants, of which there are at least nine, an Indian and a new but woefully disappointing Chinese. Memorable eating experiences are thin on the ground outside hotel dining rooms, of which the Royal County is much the best, offering a very acceptable four-course dinner (full vegetarian menu if desired) in the County restaurant from £18.25. Good wine list and brisk, attentive service in commendable comfort. The adjoining Bowes Brasserie is open all day for more informal eating.

● Three miles from the city in the village of Pitington, to-

wards Sunderland, is Hallgarth Manor, a converted small manor house more smart than chintzy, with a restaurant leaning towards nouvelle cuisine and mildly exotic dishes but, according to local opinion, with reasonably substantial portions.

● City centre restaurants patronised by the student population include the And Albert (offshoot of a pub named the Victoria, no ho) in Hallgarth Street, and Rafters in Claypath. Both reasonably priced, but neither likely to star in the foodie guides. Coffee, Danish pastries or light lunch in the cathedral cafeteria are welcome relief from foot-slogging and neck-craning at architectural glories.

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ERIC BEAUMONT

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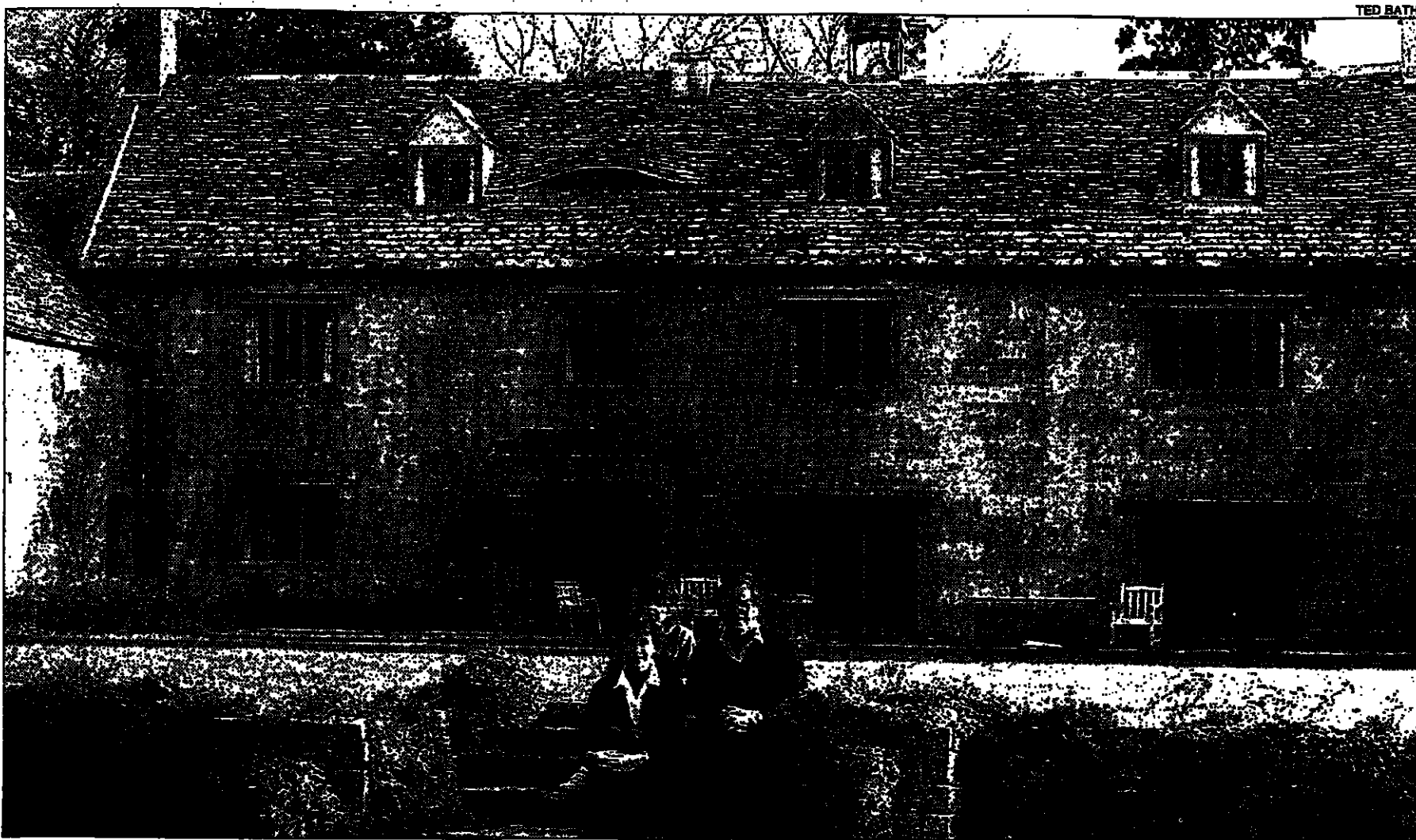
Here is another idea in keeping with the times which I came across recently at Frankfurt's swankiest hotel, the Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof: "Dear Hotel Guest," ran the note in my bathroom. "Can you imagine how many tons of towels are unnecessarily washed every day in all the hotels all over the world, and the monstrous amount of washing powder needed which thereby pollutes our water? Please decide: Hand-towel thrown into the bath or shower means 'Please exchange'. Hand-towel replaced on the towel-rail means 'I'll use it again'. For the sake of our environment."

**HILARY RUBINSTEIN**  
Editor of The Good Hotel Guide (Macmillan, £13.99)









Change of pace: Anthony and Rosie Cheetham and 18-year-old Flavia at their Gloucestershire retreat. The relaxed life-style helped Flavia to speak for the first time

## To the manor fled

Home from home: Anthony and Rosie Cheetham

**P**ublishers Anthony and Rosie Cheetham's ten-year-old daughter, Emma, always longed for a house with two staircases and "a big muddy garden". She got both when her parents bought their weekend home in Gloucestershire two years ago.

In fact, the rambling manor house has four staircases and the garden is about six acres of wilderness.

For Mr Cheetham, who spent a displaced childhood moving around the world with his parents — his father, Sir Nicolas Cheetham, was a diplomat — their weekend retreat is a place where he feels he can put down roots.

"I always wanted somewhere on the edge of a village, near enough to walk to the pub," he says. He fled to Gloucestershire after losing his job as chairman of the Random Century Group, the publishing giant, last October. "I was so used to thinking of it as a treat — one did one's work and then had two days in the country at the end

of the week — and the idea of suddenly having limitless time there seemed immensely attractive."

The feeling lasted for about a week. By that time he and Mrs Cheetham had planned a new future. They have now bought publishers Weidenfeld & Nicolson, and set up Orion Books.

Mr Cheetham, 48, is currently sharing the southwest London office of Lord Weidenfeld, who has continued as chairman, while Mrs Cheetham works from their six-bedroom house in southeast London.

On Friday nights, with Emma and her sister Rebecca, nine, they head for Gloucestershire. The manor stands in its own grounds, with stables, a little river, a ten-acre paddock for their four horses and another 90 acres that Mr Cheetham rents out to a local farmer to graze his sheep. He has become a keen gardener.

"We've chopped down the endless elms and brambles and added two fields to what had been the garden. We're turning it into an English garden — wild, with native plants. There is also what we rather grandly call the arboretum, which has about 60 trees."

The house, built of honey-coloured Cotswold stone, has about 25 smallish rooms, which means that the Cheethams can have weekend house parties for colleagues and friends.

It has also become a base for Mr Cheetham's three children by his first marriage — Nicolas, 20, Flavia, 18, and Oliver, 15. It has proved to be particularly therapeutic for Flavia, who is handicapped. "She absolutely loves it," her father says. Since living there, Flavia has started to talk for the first time.

"In the past two years more and more words have poured out," Mrs Cheetham says. "She feels secure there. Her bedroom overlooks the stables and she spends a lot of time with the horses. It seems to have liberated her."

The house is very much a community, with a full-time housekeeper, a woman who tends the horses, a twice-weekly cleaner and part-time gardeners.

For the first year the Cheethams shared the house with a team of workmen, who converted an old barn into a 120ft library with space for around 15,000 books.

So far it houses about 2,000, including Mrs Cheetham's collection of 19th-century children's writers, poetry, and her husband's books on the Middle Ages.

The library is equipped with telephones and a fax and serves as a part-time office. It was from there that the Cheethams planned their future after parting company with Random Century.

Mr Cheetham always takes work down at weekends. "I sometimes feel the week is for socialising and making telephone calls and the weekend is when the serious work gets done," he says.

Mr Cheetham has tried to create a tradition by which the whole family converge on their Gloucestershire house in August.

"Weekends seemed to go by in a flash in London. Now we get down to Gloucestershire on Friday evening full of plans about what we're going to do. It has made weekends seem like four days instead of two."

SALLY BROMPTON

Heap of the week: Eggesford House, Devon

## Fateful marriage

**E**ggesford House is an eerie ruined shell, romantically set in beautiful countryside, telling a story of decline as tragic as any country house in Britain.

Built in 1822, the house was designed by Thomas Lee, the architect of Arlington Court in north Devon, which belongs to the National Trust. Lee won awards while a student at the Royal Academy but drowned when he was aged 40.

Early photographs of Eggesford show a rich example of Regency Tudor-Gothic, with interiors full of tracery doors, pendant ceilings, crested wainscoting and battle-mented bookcases.

Records show that Lord Chichester "built a fayre house" here in James I's reign, but this house was rebuilt by William Fellowes in the early 18th century, and was described as being of brick with grounds "laid out under the direction of Mr Richmond", the landscape gardener.

Lee or his client, the Hon. Newton Fellowes, chose a new site above the river Taw. The vast estate then passed by marriage to the Earl of Portsmouth, and the cause of Eggesford's demise was the all too common one of a family making a choice between two country seats: the 6th earl preferred to live at Hurstbourne Park in Hampshire, and Eggesford, with 3,277 acres, was sold in 1913 by Knight Frank and Rutley.

The particulars mentioned a magnificent timbered park of 300 acres, two miles of carriage drive, every variety of ornamental shrub, avenues of chestnuts, a long gallery and

six staterooms, 30 bed and dressing rooms, stabling for 40 horses, and the curiosity of a "stamp room", apparently decorated with postage stamps.

A contemporary newspaper cutting records the most dreaded fate of all: "Sold for £85,000 to a timber merchant. Mr Green of Chesterfield... the fifth large estate purchased by Mr Green in 12 months." Less than a year later, Eggesford was back on the market, divided into 83 lots.

A 1917 cutting in the local library at Chulmleigh records: "The house was stripped of its fittings and the roof removed. The park was cut up and many of the magnificent trees felled."

Two years later the newly formed Forestry Commission moved in, and its characteristic signature is all too visible today. Throughout Devon, it is said, there are numerous houses containing relics of poor Eggesford.

Now the ruined shell and 83 acres are for sale, though the guide price of £350,000 seems high for a house in this state. Mid-Devon district council has granted the owners, the Chambers family trust, planning permission to rebuild the main shell as an eight-bedroom house and to create three further houses in the ruined outbuildings.

Susan Teal, whose great-uncle bought the ruin in 1929, says: "The main walls are in a stable state, and from the clock tower there is the most breathtaking panorama of Devon countryside you can imagine."

MARCUS BINNEY

Details from R. Thomas of Strutt and Parker (0392 215631)



Seeking a new romance: Eggesford House, priced at £350,000



Grampian welcome: malt whisky distilleries, salmon fishing and wild scenery are within easy reach

## Fish and whisky nips

**A**bout the only fun to be had out of selling a house is speculating on why prospective buyers are interested in the property. What sort of person, for instance, would want Garlandmore, a turn-of-the-century stone farmhouse on the edge of Morayshire's Spey valley?

A couple of miles south of the distillery village of Knockandu and within a few miles of famous names like Macallan and Glenlivet, the house is in stunning countryside a few minutes from the River Spey and some of the best salmon fishing in Britain.

Garlandmore's location, therefore, suggests strong interest from either a serious fisherman or a dedicated malt whisky drinker. Solid, if modest, farmhouses such as Garlandmore were built all over the northeast of Scotland between the 1890s and the beginning of the first world war.

They were mostly of a similar layout: a kitchen or parlour on one end of the house with a box bedroom under the stairs and the best room (for weddings and funerals) at the far end of the house along the hall. Upstairs, two bedrooms with dormer windows and a box room between the two.

The present owners, a pre-school master and his wife, have built a well-proportioned extension at the back that now gives them a kitchen with multi-fuel Rayburn and gas hob.

The box bedroom under the stairs has been knocked through to the old kitchen, which still retains the original fireplace, thus creating an L-shaped living-room. The old gas mantles still work off bottled gas, although the house is on mains electricity.

On the first floor the extension above the new kitchen has provid-

**HOUSE HUNTER**

Garlandmore  
Morayshire

ed another two bedrooms, making four altogether.

A new Victorian-style conservatory has been built on to the south gable of the house.

But the prospects for further expansion are limitless. Garland-

more was once a very well-to-do little farm, although the land has been sold off. The range of solid stone and slate steadings (or barns) is in remarkably good condition, forming a protective snuggle of buildings within a few yards of the back door.

Roses and clematis proliferate outside. The cart sheds are now garages and the cattle byre and stables retain the original cobbles and animal stalls.

The property is being sold by Brodies (15 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 8HA, 031-228 4111) for offers of more than £105,000.

ALASTAIR ROBERTSON



£22,000 for a small stone house

## Gaining a first in mortar

Before house prices pick up, first-time buyers can still have a field day

**T**he news that there is movement in the housing market is being greeted with relief by all but first-time buyers. They are happier when property is in the doldrums.

Even so, first-time buyers have rarely had it so good. Wooded by the government with the suspension of stamp duty until mid-August, and by building societies with the decision to lower the mortgage rate for new borrowers, they find they can pick and choose between properties representing excellent value for money. Most of all they can realise the dream of every property speculator and find real bargains.

All round the country surveyors and valuers are now routinely down-valuing properties, often producing estimates well below the asking price.

With the budget and a general election looming, building societies are hoping for even more incentives from the government. "We would like to see the mortgage interest tax relief limit raised to £45,000," Mark Hemingway, of the Halifax Building Society, says. "First-time buyers have everything going for them. There are a lot of properties to choose from, there is no urgency to buy, and with all the schemes and packages available, they can get an almost tailor-made deal."

Where are the real bargains, and how do you find them? Empty properties present an obvious opportunity. They may be empty for

a variety of reasons — the death of the previous owner, for example, or an owner putting a formerly rented property on to the market to cut his losses — but invariably they will be costing the vendor a lot of money to maintain, and can be worth negotiating for. There may also be bargains in former commercial properties such as pubs and shops now coming on to the residential market. In Buxton, Derbyshire, the agent Frank Marshall is selling a shop with a maisonette above for £52,000. If planning permission is forthcoming from the local council — and many councils are tending to look favourably on properties being converted for residential use — this could result in a three-storey house worth nearly twice that.

Already installed in the same town are Christopher Heald, aged 22, a travel agent, and Andrea Ainley, a safety co-ordinator with a construction company. They bought a Victorian, three-bedroom limestone terrace cottage for £39,950 last December. It had first gone on the market in April 1991 at £46,500. The vendors favoured the price when they found somewhere else to buy, and wanted a quick sale.

Mr Heald and Ms Ainley had been looking at properties for a year and snapped it up when the



Bargain for Heald and Ainley

price dropped. "It had been far too high for us before that," Mr Heald says. "But it was exactly what we were looking for, and suddenly it was at a price we could afford."

There is also the possibility of finding a bargain among proper-

ties developers have acquired in part exchange for new houses, or in new houses themselves. "Builders have been prepared to lower prices by as much as 20 per cent," Raymond Butterworth, of Eddisons in West Yorkshire, says. Many have also been offering incentives to new buyers, such as paying legal fees.

One type of property that has always represented a good deal is a dated and unmodernised house. They have always attracted first-time buyers who are prepared to put up with a little discomfort in return for a lot of property for their money.

Finally, there are repossessions. With more than 80,000 in 1991, and after a government and building society initiative that came too late to help many, repossessed houses and flats are selling well below their normal market value. Identifying them can sometimes be difficult. "You may need to be a bit of a detective," Adrian Snook, of Bridgford in Northwich, Cheshire, says. "Obvious pointers are shiny new locks and an empty house."

The advantage of buying a repossessed property is that there is no vendor hanging on for the best offer. "Prices will vary according to the amount the building societies need to recover," says Shirley McGuire of the agent Barnard Marcus in Battersea, south London.

Best value of all, he says, are repossessed former council houses. "These properties give the most bricks and mortar for the least price," Mr Snook says. And it may mean getting an extra bedroom. Mr Snook recently sold a three-bedroom semi in poor condition for £38,500 in Middlewich. A Victorian terrace house in the same area with just two bedrooms costs £39,950. The drawback is that former council houses are unlikely to appreciate in value so quickly when the market eventually turns. "They will not be as saleable as a house of private origin," Mr Snook says. "They tend to be surrounded by tenanted properties and there is still a stigma attached to them."

Until confidence returns to the housing market and worries about the perceived threat of unemployment subside, home owners are still tending to move only when forced to, for job or family reasons. That means first-time buyers will remain ahead of the game. It is, as they say, an ill wind.

CHERYL TAYLOR

KAY MARLES

## A sports car ride from Le Mans

**F**or just £22,000 (including agent's fees) you can buy this pretty terrace house (left) in a peaceful hamlet a few miles from the medieval town of Mayenne, in the region of the same name. The ferry port of St Malo is about 90 minutes' drive.

The old stone house has been fully renovated and is ready to move into. It has a kitchen and storage room on the ground floor, a living-room, double bedroom and modernised bathroom upstairs, and another two bedrooms above. The price includes a large, secluded back garden with fruit trees and views over a wooded valley. (The UK agent is Normandy & Brittany Cottages, 62 Chesson Road, London W14, 071-381 4433.)

The Mayenne, the northernmost department of the Loire, is somewhat overshadowed by its better-known neighbours, Nor-



Buyers' France  
THE MAYENNE

mandy and Brittany, and tends to be ignored by British holiday-makers and house-hunters travelling through it to the Dordogne and the Charente.

A peaceful farming region, gentle and rolling in parts, with winding country lanes, it is rather like Devon, with a lot less rain. The area is also famous for its rustic cuisine, with a good range of charcuterie, strong cheese and rich pork-based pâtés.

There is a good range of property in the area, from cot-

tages and farm buildings to manor houses and châteaux, with plenty around for under £25,000.

It is well-placed for excursions into the Loire valley and to the beaches of Normandy and Brittany. Le Mans, the mecca of motor racing, is practically on the doorstep.

There are a number of historic towns in the Mayenne, including Laval and medieval Ste Suzanne. A fortified town on a hill. Houses in the area are mainly built of stone and have steeply sloping slate roofs, arched doorways, enormous oak beams and huge, open fireplaces.

Properties here are generally less expensive than in Normandy and Brittany, but will often need modernising. You can still find an old ferme (farm cottage) to restore with mains water and electricity and half an acre of land, for under £10,000. But you

will need to spend at least £25,000 for anything that is habitable.

A large farmhouse in good condition with three or four bedrooms, numerous outbuildings and up to 15 acres of agricultural land will set you back at least £30,000.

Village houses, usually with two bedrooms and room for expansion in the loft, offer the best value. These are often on mains drainage. Prices start at £15,000 for a small terrace house in need of some modernisation, but with all services intact.

Alternatively, there are maisons bourgeoises — rather grand, classically proportioned mansions generally located at the edge of a village. Many come with an acre or two of land and can be picked up for as little as £50,000.



# Fairy stories at bedtime

**Kay Marles meets a furniture maker whose designs for children come from the heart, not the head**

**B**rightly painted cupboards, alphabet friezes on the walls and a generous sprinkling of teddy bears and toys are the stuff that nurseries are usually made of. But for Mark Wilkinson, a furniture designer and maker, that wasn't enough.

When he turned his attention to children's cupboards and wardrobes last year he wanted to use irregular shapes, as few right angles as possible, and a large element of fantasy.

"I discovered that there had been little innovation in children's furniture. I wanted to make something that looked nice and that children could use easily, without hurting themselves," he says.

Mr Wilkinson runs a company that makes kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and one-off pieces. It was a commission for a crib for the grandson of a pigeon shooter that sparked off the idea of making children's furniture. He made a substantial swinging crib with a roughly carved pigeon perched high above. "It was the obvious finishing touch," he says.

He is a fifth generation cabinet maker. He learnt from his father, who made scenery for television productions, and his grandfather, and by the age of 16 had acquired the skills of a master joiner. He has had no formal training in design and claims his ideas grow out of his dreams, and that he learnt to dream at school, where, as an unrecognised dyslexic, he was often unable to keep up.

In 1978, with two partners, he set up Smallbone of Devizes, which has become one of the most successful furniture making businesses of recent years. In 1982 he was bought out of the company, but resurfaced almost immediately with another business, where he employs more than 120 people. His wife Cynthia is managing director. Their children — Greg-



Dream ideas in the nursery: furniture maker Mark Wilkinson with his daughter Victoria, aged three, and the Goldilocks range

ory, aged 11, and Victoria, three, — adore the designs. "Victoria is so thrilled that she invites her friends to 'come up and see my Goldilocks,'" her mother says. "She especially loves the dressing table and chair. She keeps plastic neckties in the trinket drawer and tissues in the big drawer. It all makes her feel quite grown up."

A hugely boyish character — even the flamboyantly russet moustache has a touch of the circus strongman about it — Mr Wilkinson had no difficulty dreaming up fantastical elements for his furniture.

He entertains from time to time in a fully fitted Gothic tree house he built several years ago in a field close to his factory, inviting guests to drink and dinner via a steep and narrow wooden ladder.

He makes the children's furni-

ture mostly from ash, with some chestnut. "I like the associations of the ash tree," he says. "In Celtic mythology, the ash is the tree of protection and healing. I find that appropriate for children."

**H**is Goldilocks collection of children's furniture includes a cot-bed and ordinary bed, wardrobe, changing table, chest of drawers, dressing table, chair and bedside table. The design is clearly based on Disneyesque images, with distorted legs, exaggerated shapes, sweeping curves and everything slightly off-centre.

"These designs come from my emotional side," he says. "You can't come up with a design idea in your head, it has to come from the heart." There are teddy bear ears on the top of the wardrobe

around a teddy bear frieze, and more roughly hewn delft staves in the head and foot boards of the bed and around the top of the wardrobe and changing table.

For the crib, which is 45in high and 45in long, he has used chestnut, but instead of inserting identical round bars, he has used staves cut out of wet chestnut logs, which make the crib look rustic and quirky, and the wood soft and natural.

With furniture makers needing to tread a careful line these days he imports the ash, through a merchant, from plantations in the United States, where trees are harvested and replanted much like any other crop. "I tend to use English timbers only for one-off commission pieces, because I don't want to be a party to the depletion of timber here. I prefer

to see English timber standing up," he says.

His furniture looks and feels user-friendly. There is a low chest (E685) with three drawers side by side, which slide out easily and have firm stops, and a wardrobe (E737) with sloping sides. This has a hanging rail, shelf, and a deep drawer below.

The Goldilocks chair, at £219, has an exaggeratedly high back with teddy bear ears, tapered legs and a traditionally sculpted, bobbin backed Windsor seat. The child's bed pictured is £710, and the dressing table costs £685. A wicker toy basket with wooden hinges on squat wooden bun feet costs £338.

Mark Wilkinson Furniture, Overton House, High Street, Bromham, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2HA (0380 850004).

## Calling collect

Telephone cards are fetching high prices and the hobby is spreading

**T**he Greeks do not have a word for it. Telephone card collecting is a rapidly growing hobby in many countries, but the suggestion that it could be promoted as a rival to philately under the name "fusilately" is dismissed by the world's leading expert, Dr Steve Hiscocks.

"Fusilately has no chance of becoming an international word," he says. "In France it would be taken to mean gun collecting, because fusil is French for a rifle."

France is impossible to ignore because telephone card collecting is serious business there. Three days a week there is a street market largely devoted to telephone cards, on the Avenue Matignon by the Rond-Point des Champs-Élysées. A recent Paris fair had about 40 booths manned by telephone card dealers, who reckon they already have 25,000 regular customers. There are probably at least another 50,000 telecardists.

In Britain Dr Hiscocks, who gave up his job as a senior principal at the energy department to compile telephone card catalogues for Stanley Gibbons, is this weekend launching the hobby's first journal, *International Telephone Cards*.

The first public telephone card was issued in Italy in January 1976. Britain followed suit in 1981. Now telephone cards are issued in at least 130 countries, some in a bewildering profusion of designs.

"There are said to be a million telephone card collectors in Japan," says Dr Hiscocks, "but the issuing policy there has been

utterly irresponsible, with nearly 100,000 different cards in circulation already."

The Japanese can even buy blanks and use a machine in the street to make telephone cards to their own design, using a photo, business card or whatever.

The first Japanese card issued is reported to have changed hands for the equivalent of £28,000. Some French cards fetch prices up to £4,000. An early Taiwan pair reached £2,800.

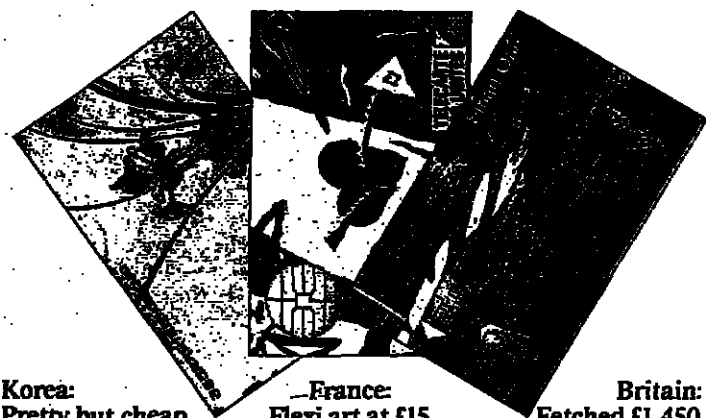
**I**n Britain, the first ten-unit Phonocard, of which 50,000 were issued originally at 50p each, is catalogued at £150 unused and £30 used. An early complimentary five-unit card (handed out free to familiarise the public with the Phonocard concept) is now worth £15 unused. Unused cards from Mercury's first issue at the end of July 1988 are worth £125.

The most valuable British card is the 40-unit DFS, used by the manufacturers Landis & Gyr to promote its solid state metering technology. Only 50 were issued, and any unused are now worth at least £1,200.

Whether you call it fusilately, telecardism, or a modern folly, Dr Hiscocks believes telephone card collecting, while still a cheap hobby to enter, has all the makings of a big collecting business, just like stamps or banknotes.

ROBIN YOUNG

Subscriptions for the first six issues of the bi-monthly *International Telephone Cards* cost £14.50 from PO Box 77, Woking, Surrey, GU22 0HB.



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# Owl's in his barn, all's right with the world

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

**T**errific news! I went out late the other night to the barn to get a bucketful of barley. The air was still, the sky clear and every sound for miles around was quite distinct. As I crept through the doors, I heard a rustling like that of a rat. But as I moved further and the shadows became more urgent and out of the shadows came a winged white creature with wide eyes piercing down. He circled once above me, eyeing me with his marbled stare, and flew into the night. We have a barn owl in the barn.

I cannot think of anything which has given me more delight. I take it as a seal of approval that the intelligent owl has found a little corner of the agricultural landscape of which he approves; or even a barn he finds comfortable.

They don't build barns with crooked oak beams any more. A modern barn is clad in dreary asbestos on a rusting iron framework. Nothing much there for a

clawed foot to hold on to, or even a nice knot-hole in which to insert an inquisitive beak. When the rotten walls of our barn were replaced last year, we debated whether it was worth preserving a circular hole in the apex of the roof, about the size of a dinner plate. After an old boy, who years ago laboured on this farm, insisted "you put that there of 'ole back in that barn for them 'owls", we ordered the builder to carve the orifice. It has paid off handsomely.

Of course, to an owl finding a farm like ours must seem like dropping in on heaven. The owl population, I read, was at its greatest in the days when farmers kept their corn in stacks, and hay in ricks; these provided havens for hordes of mice and rats which in turn gave the owl his daily bread.



But when the combine-harvester arrived, which processed the grain in the field rather than in the barnyard, the stacks went, the mice became fewer and the owls dwindled.

Well, I have removed all the mouse-traps and the rat poison and our distinguished visitor can now eat away to his heart's content.

I wonder if anyone of influence is ever going to be as wise as the old owl and admit that traditional farming as practised in the first half of this century (and which we try to emulate on this farm), for all its financial faults and labouring hardships, was an inherently healthier way of farming the land.

A student came to work here for a few days and on his return to college told one of his tutors that we were growing a crop of vetches; or tares,



as they are known in these parts. The student was sharply reminded that this was an old-fashioned crop of no further use, and so not worth preserving. Is this poor lad receiving a rounded education?

Vetches are green-leaved plants, sweet and luscious to graze. They are equally tasty if made into hay or silage to produce high-protein feed. The roots fix fertilising nitrogen in the soil, and the plant's ability to form a dense mat means that any weeds cheekily enough to rear their heads are smothered at birth. So the vetch is a fertiliser, rich feedstuff

and effective weedkiller. Nowadays, all those properties could be supplied by applied chemicals. But if you had the choice, how would you prefer to manage your soil? With the virtue-packed vetch, or the questionable drum of chemical? And would you have the arrogance to declare that such a versatile plant "was of no further use"?

I have to admit, having grown vetches last year and found them so dense that the horse-drawn mower could not move an inch through them — my fault for not having sown eye or oats with them to provide an upright stem for them to cling to — I cursed them, too. But a hired tractor-mower did the job, the horse-drawn tedder made the hay, and, having sweated under a crippling sun to stack it, I did curse the day I ever heard of the vetch. But it is now feeding the sheep, who fight for it like children scrambling for sweets, and the stack will last right through the winter; and I am thankful for it.

I hope that the misguided lecturer was merely having a bad day; but if past form is anything to go by agriculture is not too careful with its precious past.

Were it not for the far-sighted breeders who kept alive the declining species, we would now have no Large Black pigs. No Alice.

At one stage it seemed as if the future of pigs lay in housing them in indoor intensive units. Outdoor pigs were assumed to be "no longer of value". Now, of course, the outdoor pig is in fashion again. But where would modern breeders have gone to acquire the hardiness the modern outdoor pig requires if all the old bloodlines had been allowed to die away?

And vetches, too, will have their day again. But if by that time they are rare, and those who preached their obsolescence try coming here for my precious seed, don't be surprised if I set the barn owl on them. We both know who our friends are.

## Blazing saddles in Perth

**Callum Murray meets up with the boots and stetsons set, intent on learning how to cast a long shadow on a quarter horse**

**I**n a corner of a big indoor ring, close to the chest-high, boarded perimeter fence, a man in a stetson is giving a horse a trying time. In the background, women riders with hard riding hats and straight backs trot in serene, disciplined circles.

The man swings one of the free ends of his rope in a long arc, behind him, catching his horse a deliberate crack across its powerful hind-quarters. It springs forward in a clumsy bound, snorting. But the man is ready for it, quickly bringing the horse back under control. Then he coaxes it into another manoeuvre, spinning it —

riding "circle".

"So what's this?" asks a passing hard-hat, sarcastically. "A cowboy meeting?" "No," one of the watching stetsons replies, with a hint of irritation. "It's Western horsemanship."

More than that, this is a three-day Western riding "clinic" at the Mark Phillips Equestrian Centre at the Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire, Scotland. Fifteen Western riding enthusiasts have paid £100 each to attend, most bringing their own horses.

The clinic has been organised by Kathleen Edwards, a Canadian who began Western riding after she moved to Scotland seven years ago. She says she is not making a profit from the clinic. The fees cover the hire of the ring, the instructor's plane fare, hotel bill and modest daily wage.

The instructor is Len Yule of Kentucky, who is sitting still on the horse and making it bend its face back towards him until its nose almost touches his knee.

In a few minutes he finishes the training session and walks over to the spectators. There are some traditionalists who object to Western training techniques, claiming they are cruel. Clearly Mr Yule is a little concerned about the im-

pression his methods might make on the inexperienced.

"I literally took physical control," he explains. "In about 15 minutes I had her going deep into the corners. She has been allowed to waffle and flop about. Other people set up situations. I have to be the bad guy and sort it out."

Western riding has its origins in the highly practical discipline of cattle herding, where there was no time for wilful or nifty behaviour of the kind often associated with horses kept for pleasure.

"Horses get spoilt because you accept that kind of behaviour," is one of Mr Yule's many maxims. If it is any consolation to the traditionalists, the modern Western horse has it easy, relatively speaking. "If your horse lost you a cow in the old days," a Western horse breeder tells me, "then I'm afraid you probably ate it."

The classic Western breed is the quarter horse, so called because it was originally bred as a sprinter for quarter-mile races. It is one of the few breeds specifically created to cooperate with man.

The horse Mr Yule has been subduing is typical, Ms Edwards says. "A sweetie-pie face and an apple bum." She adds that the "apple bum" has led to the misconception that quarter horses derive their name from their large hind-quarters.

The other common misconception about the Western riding style is based mainly on Western films (one of the few good exponents of the Western riding style in movies is, apparently, Clint Eastwood).

Mr Yule, however, says there is surprisingly little difference between the Western and "English" styles. "Good horsemanship is good horsemanship," he says.

In Western riding the hands are, perhaps, held slightly further apart; the body is kept slightly less upright; and the voice is used more. But the Western film image of the cowboy



At home on the range: Shona Anderson shows off her new-found skills in the ring at the Gleneagles equestrian centre in Perthshire

### Where to see them

Today Quarter horse clinic with American Quarter Horse Association judge, Shortwood Lodge Equestrian Centre, near Peterborough (0994 484580).

Tomorrow Western Horseman's Association clinic, Zara Stud, near Chichester (0243 641662).

February 22 Quarter horse rally, Welsh equestrian centre, Llanstephan, Caernarvon (0994 484580).

March 14-15 Western Horseman's Association clinic and Western show, Zara Stud, near Chichester (0243 641662).

April 11 Western Equestrian Society Western day, Claverton, Warwicks (0926 842806).

same numbers of men and women) Mr Robertson wears a stetson and jeans.

For the men, especially, one of the attractions of Western riding is that it avoids the formality of the British riding establishment and its pony club and hunting associations. He says his immediate ambition is not to win Western riding competitions (of which there are a growing number), but to go along to a riding club that teaches only English style, and show them exactly what a Western-trained horse can do.

Although to the untrained eye the Western-style training does look a little cruel, Mr Yule says that the original need for a working horse that was highly responsive and obedient meant that Western horses are simply more highly trained. One definition of dressage is "Any riding that goes beyond mere usefulness".

He also contends that a ranch horse has to understand far more than other horses. This is why the training can seem so rigorous. "The idea is to help the horse

understand what we want," Mr Yule explains. "A lot of the European tradition is redundant. What we have to offer is handiness and lightness."

As an illustration of what the Western approach can achieve, even with English-trained horses, Mr Yule tells the story of a thoroughbred mare that had run over a groom and "creamed him pretty good".

The first thing Mr Yule did was to put the horse in a pen and get it to relate to him psychologically. Then he rode it without anything on its head, taking it to a water hole where it took one look and spun to one side.

Instead of resisting, Mr Yule continued the spin, making the horse turn eight or nine revolutions, bringing it out of the turn facing the water hole. Three more times the same thing happened, until, Mr Yule says, the horse thought: "This is thirsty work. Son of a gun. I think I'll have a drink." "Three weeks later," he concludes, "my six-year-old was riding her with a string in her mouth."

Further information from the British Quarter Horse Association, 0203 696549.

### Funny you should ask...

A series on outdoor matters in which you ask the questions — and provide the answers.

#### BIRD FEEDER

Our old wood-and-wire bird feeder was demolished by a squirrel, and we bought a tough new plastic model to carry on feeding the hordes of birds that flocked to our garden. However, despite being filled with the same food they found irresistible in the last feeder, they won't come near the new one. The design is very similar — tubular with short perches at the base. Apart from being plastic, the only major difference is its colour: bright green. Could this be either revolting them or frightening them? — *M. Spink, St Albans, Hertfordshire*

#### CAT DEATHS

There was a concerned response to Valerie Swingle's request for ideas on why her mother's young cats were being found dead, curled up as if asleep in her garden.

I suspect the deaths are coincidental, and due to each having been involved in a motor accident, where they have sustained a glancing blow to their heads. Subsequently there is a brain haemorrhage, and in every case I've heard of the cat is found "curled up as if asleep", but dead. Strangely, country cats are more prone to such hazards than town-living cats. Mrs Swingle's mother might be better to adopt an older, rather timid cat as it would be less venturesome. To mark its territory — after the precaution of keeping it confined indoors for at least two weeks — it is useful to sprinkle litter from its tray around the garden perimeter.

Miss P. Goodwin, member, Brighton and Hove Cats Protection League.

There is one rat poison that causes death by hypothermia — sodium alpha chloralose. The animal can die in its sleep on a cold night, though I would be surprised at a cat eating enough from a poisoned rat to kill it, unless it was a small cat. — *Mrs H. McGee, Banbury, Oxfordshire*

#### WATER SNAILS

G.T. Hulme, of Sale, Cheshire, asked for ideas to combat an invasion of water snails in his garden pond.

Each evening, distribute fresh lettuce leaves all over the pond. In the morning, remove the leaves with a long-handled fishing net. You will find the snails under the lettuce leaves. It has taken more than two years to remove the great pond snails from my pond. You do not get this trouble with the ramshorn snails, which are of great value in the pond. — *Dr E.W. Bedford-Turner, Potgate, East Sussex*

Please send your questions to: *Funny you should ask*, Weekend Times, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

### EVENTS

□ **Northumberland sea shaping:** A National Trust walk to learn how coastal features have evolved. Wear sturdy footwear and waterproofs. Car-park, Craster, near Alnwick, Northumberland (0665 576365). Today, 10am. £1.

□ **Horspath dogs:** Sheep, police and army dog society championship with 140 dogs, mainly German shepherds and border collies, tested on obedience, agility and nosework. The winner of the senior section enters the Kennel Club championships in October. Village Hall, Horspath, Oxfordshire (0472 342283, Mrs Jones). Today and tomorrow, 10am-5pm. Spectators free.

□ **Harrogate gardening course:** A look at advanced propagation techniques such as air-layering, grafting and budding, with a practical session in the garden greenhouse. Harlow Car Botanical Gardens, Crag Lane, Harrogate, N Yorks (0423 565418). Fri, 1.30-4pm. £8 (booking only).

□ **Stoneleigh stallions:** British Warm Blood Society stallion grading show. Trotting, cantering and jumping abilities tested. British Equestrian Centre, Stoneleigh, near Kenilworth, Warwickshire (0203 696697). Today 9am-5.30pm, tomorrow 9am-2.30pm. £4.50.

□ **Wildfowl in Lancashire:** RSPB guided two-hour walk looking at

teal, shoveler and wigeon, with a chance of hearing bitterns boom. Leighton Moss Nature Reserve, Myers Farm, Silverdale, Lancs (0524 701601). Tomorrow, 10am and 2pm. £1, child 50p.

□ **Peterborough sheep dog trials:** Nursery and novice sheep dogs are tested on their sheep-handling skills. East of England Showground, Abington, Peterborough, Cambs (0733 234451). Today 9.30am. Spectators free.

□ **Yorkshire ramble:** A 12-mile walk via Cote Bridge, Fleensop Moor, and Burton Moor. Meet West Burton Falls, West Burton, near Aysgarth, N Yorks. Tues, 10am. Free.

#### GARDENS TO VISIT

□ **Oxfordshire:** Theatrical landscape garden of the early 18th century, designed by William Kent, with water, follies, sculpture and walled gardens. Rousham House, 2m S of Steeple Aston. £2 (no children under 15). 10am-4.30pm.

□ **Leicestershire:** Turn-of-the-century 16-acre garden with fine trees, formal pool and glasshouses. National Collection of skimmias. Leicester University Botanic Garden, Stoughton Drive South, Oadby, 3m SE of city centre. Free. Open weekdays 10am-dusk (Fri 3.30pm).

## Squeakings of spring in your face and ears

### FEATHER REPORT

**S**pring is an insidious process: it creeps up unawares. The best way to notice spring is to employ a kind of stop-frame animation technique. Day by day you hardly notice the rising clamour, the growing urgency. Turn your back for a week or two and the change is deafening.

I have been away watching the in-your-face rituals of American sport: this being jargon for a certain quality of overwhelmingness favoured by such people as the Washington Redskins' offensive line. I returned home and went to my favourite wood: I was at once assaulted by the in-your-face ritual of spring.

The year is a long time turning, building slowly to the crescendo of May. It is too early yet for the arrival of those sensible birds which spend their winters abroad. We have getting on for six weeks before the first arrivals: chiffchaff, wheatear and sand martin.

But never mind these fair weather birds. Spring is quite happy to start without them, as the transformed wood told me. The noisiest bird of the lot is the great tit: that ringing double-note is the easiest call in the world to distinguish. The call was absent in January:

now the wood is full of it. But let us tune our ears to slightly trickier birds: the secret squeakers of Britain. These are tree-creepers and goldcrests: common birds seldom seen. They do not come to bird-tables, they dislike open spaces, but any decent stand of trees should find them. Normally, as I say, squeaking.

Both these squeakers are unbelievably high, and thin. Some people can't hear them at all. Some lose the ability to hear high-pitched noises with age. I remember one crusty old birder telling me: "I no longer hear goldcrests, or women." It was unclear whether he was implying a double misfortune, or simply that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

To acquire an ear for the squeakers is a kind of conjuring trick. Hear one squeak, and suddenly these furtive little birds are everywhere. Goldcrests are especially good at confifers, but they can turn up anywhere with trees, and they love the high canopy.

Tree-creepers are a rare example of a bird with an accurate name. They almost always do it in spirals,



Squeakers: tree-creepers and goldcrests: common birds seldom seen

appearing and disappearing as they creep up the trunk. Both these birds eat tree-loving insects, and each has evolved a different technique for getting hold of them. Goldcrests pick them out among the leaves and twigs; tree-creepers from the bark. Two different ecological niches, in the jargon.

These are both niches that keep the birds out of sight most of the time, and one of the reasons why they squeak. They squeak to keep in touch with each other: contact calls, in yet more jargon. The tree-creepers' squeak is more sus-

tained: slightly less squeaky than the goldcrests'. As spring advances, they will add a squeaky song to their repertoire.

I took my jet-lag and my binoculars to this lovely chunk of wood ten minutes from my front door. What a boon it is to have somewhere like that, and so close to the M25, too. The M25 here is not so much a convenience as a veiled threat. This is a patch of the kind of woodland that we once had all over the place. Most of it was clear-felled before the last war, but here, re-planting and manage-

ment schemes have re-created a splendid place, full of oak, beech, hornbeam, birch and ash. And full of birds — getting noisier and squeakier by the day. At weekends, the place is full of dogs and dog-walkers and children, and yet the birds squeak on undeterred.

The wood is a great place for people and for birds. It is the kind of place we should be encouraging, for all our sakes. Instead, we are encouraging roads. Fact: in the southeast alone, 54 road-building schemes put at risk 322 places important to conservation, and 142 of them involve ancient woodland. It is an odd society that prefers pollution and traffic jams to children, dogs and squeaky birds.

I leave the last word to my *Where to Watch Birds* book: "Birdwatchers with the slightest feel for a wood will find themselves returning to this superb site time and time again, and probably speculate why there are not many more like it."

#### SIMON BARNES


What's about: *Birders* — listen out for the latest spring singers, especially chaffinch and blackbird. *Twitchees* — surfscaper at Peel Bay, Devon: little hunting near Bude, Cornwall. Details from Brintline, 0891 70022.



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CHANNEL 4

6.00 **Trans World Sport** (p) (215158) 7.00 **Eureeka's Castle** (86603)  
7.30 **Starstreet** (7074254) 7.55 **The Wheel Chair** (7986055) 8.25  
8.50 **Remona** (8659589) 8.55 **Little Rabbit** (c) (4363790)  
9.25 **The Sword of Tipu Sultan** (177603) Drama serial. In Hindustani with English subtitles (177603)  
9.50 **Diapheetas** (177603) A story of a drug to relieve AIDS that seems to be doing more harm than good (p) (1785877)  
10.45 **Dennis** (Animated adventures) (1473581)  
11.00 **D'Art** A repeat of Thursday's programme about deaf children using sign language to explore the skills and fun of the performing arts (p) (1548) 11.30 **Flipper** Adventures of a dolphin (p) (1055)  
12.00 **Little House On The Prairie** Drama about family life in the Midwest (5926) 1.00 **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** Underwater adventures (32974)  
2.00 **Opera On 4** Jendro, Roberta Alexander and Philip Langridge star in Janáček's opera about a young woman's involvement with her two stepbrothers. With the Glyndebourne Chorus and the London Philharmonic Chorus under Andrew Davies. Song in Czech with English subtitles. Directed by Nikolaus Henhoff (c) (5648532)  
4.10 **Frankie Jones** American animation (531-4633)  
4.25 **Valued Opinion** The Victorian Punch cartoonist, Linley Sambourne's house is explored by antiques expert Max Robertson and Sotheby's John Culme (8704518)  
4.55 **News and weather** (5420051)  
5.00 **Scottish Eye: The Cost of a Ship** A report on the thousands of tonnage Glasgow shipyard workers who are at risk from an increasing force of cancer due to their years of contact with asbestos (8177)  
5.30 **Star Chamber**  
© CHOICE: A new series devised with half an eye on the general election takes politicians in a bare studio and subjects them to questions by a computer. The first subject is Roy Hattersley and unless there has been a change of government, the next will be Tony Blair that he gives a most accomplished performance, spontaneous, fluent and witty. The range of questions is deliberately catholic, embracing the seriously political (why has Labour lost three elections?), the potentially embarrassing (when was your first sexual experience?) and the downright edging one (what category of Hattersley's chance to enthuse over Len Hutton, Eric Morecambe and the Andrews Sisters, all of whom are recalled on film). The show is high on entertainment value and as a vote-counting guide is ten times more effective than any party political broadcast (832)  
6.00 **Teenage Health Freak** The last programme in the series about a teenager's growing pains (c) (245)  
6.30 **The Wonder Years** Nostalgic look at young American life in the 1960s. Kevin is picked as captain of the football team (569)  
7.00 **Fremantle** The Fremantle fishing net. To conservationists they are a precious species deserving protection but to fishermen they are vermin and they are calling for a cull to prevent the seals from destroying fish stocks (Teletext) (c) (8239)  
8.00 **Whicker's World - Down Under** Alan Whicker meets some of the migrants from Britain who have found success in the sun, enjoying the Australian lifestyle (8239)  
8.30 **On The Edge: Improvisation In Music** Tonight's programme features the work of Max Roach who teaches Harlem children to improve in jazz; Butch Morris who invented "conduction"; and Sam Wan Park who updates ancient Korean music (c) (76336)  
9.30 **Eureeka's Castle** (86603) Drama serial. In Hindi with English subtitles (86603) 10.00 **My Family Story** A Journey, and Tony Banks, MP, and Peter C. Clarke discussing The End of History and the Last Man by Francis Fukuyama (81065)



**Redundant spies: John Standing and Tom Conti (10.05pm)**

**10.05 Old Boy Network**  
 a) **Crime** John Standing and Tom Conti star in a spy spoof based on the premise that with the end of the cold war the espionage business is in the doldrums and secret agents are not exactly in demand. Standing has retired from MI5 and a loose end, Conti, who was his flag at school, is just back from the former Soviet Union to which he defected ten years before. They decide, much against their respective judgments, to go into business together. The big purpose of this amusing but, on the early evidence, not overwhelmingly funny show is that it is written by Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais (750429)

**10.35 The South Bank Show: Set Shop Boys.** Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe talk to Melyn Bregg about their music (a) (545897)

**11.35 Hooked!** The fourth of six programmes about drugs in the 1990s (241719)

**12.05 Comedy Cue the Music.** With rock band Magnum (s) (6842104)

**1.15 The TV Chat Show (s)** (r) (566393)

**2.10 Film: Wages** (1981) starring George Kennedy and Stella Stevens. Feeble spoof about a policeman on the trail of a serial killer. Directed by Greydon Clark (890814)

**3.50 Pick of the Week (r)** (33069727) **4.20 Adventure** (9999982)

**5.00 Soap (r)** (45922)

**5.50 News** (99907) **Ends at 8.00**



**We're all out brothers: Peter Sellers as Fred Kite (10.00pm)**

**2.00 Film: Sonatine** (1984). Delicate exploration of female adolescent suicide. Directed by Micheline Lanctôt. A French-Canadian film with English subtitles (763814). Ends at 1:40am

7622] 11.00 British Rugby League  
00am Cricket — World Series Cup

[illegible]

**3.50 The Haunting Of Sarah H**  
wealthy heiress is driven to the



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CHANNEL 4

6.00 *Aquaman* (B592467) 8.25 *Dor Smuggles* (5719931) 5.55 *Once Upon A Time... Space* (B371196) 7.25 *The Complete Spider* (7854467) 5.75 *Trans World Sport* (1183893)

9.00 *News* (B738899) 9.15 *Racing: The Morning Line* (1506325)

9.30 *Listening Eye* (r) (25467)

10.00 *The Big 8*, Sheffield Students v London City Jazz in last year's wheelchair basketball tournament. (Teletext) (s) (r) (74318)

10.30 *50-50* (B57154) *Bald Calais* (1943, b/w) starring John Sutton and Lee J. Cobb. David Lanning morale-booster about a British commando who is dropped into occupied France with orders to prepare the way for an RAF raid on a munitions factory. Directed by John Brann (B530009)

11.45 *Ball of Wax*, Animation by Nikolai Serbyakov (4112486)

12.00 *Get Smart*, Spot spoof comedy continuing Don Adams (85370) 12.30 *The Beverly Hillsbillies* (b/w), Virginia Mayo (22983)

1.00 *Film: The Red Badge of Courage* (1951)

1.00 *Clive: The Red Badge of Courage* (1951) wrote a brilliant book about it. *The Red Badge of Courage* has become the archetypal stick with which to beat a pretentious Hollywood. Perhaps the director John Huston was asking too much of a commercial system to embrace a subject with artistic pretensions and no stars. It was, moreover, offering a bleak view of war when American troops were on the retreat in Korea. Stephen Crane's story centred on a young recruit in the American civil war who runs away from the horrors of war, only to later realise that he must choose to redeem himself. To play the part Huston chose a relatively unknown actor but real war hero, Audie Murphy. After a disastrous preview the producers re-edited the film, reduced its running time and added a commentary. If not the result Huston intended *The Red Badge of Courage* still scores with its battle scenes and vivid monochrome photography (727884)

2.15 *Channel 4 Racing from Newcastle*. The 2.50, 3.00, 3.35, 4.10 and 4.40 races (B5444)

5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (r), (Teletext) (c) (A953134)

6.30 *Right to Reply*, Includes comment on Poles of Passion (738)

7.00 *A Week in Politics*, A look at the new EC budget (4979)

8.00 *TV Heaven*, In the second of the 13-part television archive series Frank Muir introduces three classic examples from the 1950s (887636)

8.05 *This Year 1983* (b/w) Bryan Magee reflects on the origins of the "new" satira movement with a young Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller, Michael Frayn, William Rushton and John Birt (849680)

8.55 *The Lover* (b/w), Harold Pinter's sensual drama starring Vivien Merchant and Alan Badel as a married couple. Directed by Joan Kemp-Welch, the play offended a lot of people at the time but picked up several awards including the Prix Italia. (Teletext) (B5718)

10.05 *The Avengers* (b/w), Patrick Macnee and Honor Blackman star in an early episode of the secret agent series. (Teletext) (1155552)



**Baby Bliss: GuttaSerena Suckle** Dampen and charge (7.50mm)

**7.50 Fifty Three Men and a Baby** (1967)  
**☺ CHOICE:** For reasons which it will take some future sociologists to unravel, baby pictures were suddenly all the Hollywood rage in the late 1960s. Adapted from a hit French comic and directed by Sidney Lumet, *Fifty Three Men and a Baby* was one of the most successful. The premise is simple. Three bachelors agree to look after a package for a friend and discover a cradle on the doorstep containing a baby girl. There follow the expected, but still funny, efforts of the underdomesticated trio to change nappies, prepare feeds and generally keep their young charge happy. Perhaps the film does not stretch to 100 minutes, which explains the attempt to patch it out with a dispensable subplot about drug dealers. (8262650)

**9.45 News with Flora Armstrong.** Weather (105569) **10.00 LWT** weather (308379)

**10.05 Aspel and Company.** Michael Aspel's guests are actress Vanessa Redgrave, *P.O. Hoolihan*'s Danny Baker and singer Mick Hucknall who will be played by his group Simply Red. (846551)

**10.10 Ten O'Clock News.** A news bulletin featuring reports of new recruits on active service during the Vietnam war. (102134)

**11.55 Game of Weeks.** The heavy metal group recorded in concert last summer (726979)

**12.25am WCW Pro Wrestling.** More grappling, grunting and growling from the glants in America. (826579)

**1.25 New Line Movies and Videos.** (826719)

**2.25 Bhanga Bhat.** Includes the Nachdars Samsar dancers recorded live at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall (849179)

**2.55 Coach.** American comedy series (8) (802615)

**3.25 American College Football.** Arkansas v Texas A and M (613279)

**4.20 The Hit Man and Her.** Peter Weller and Michele Strachan introduce the films (8) (702393)

**5.30 The Midnight News.** (77271). Fozz & Co.



**Not much courtroom drama:** Michael Zander (11, 15pm)

11.15 Court TV: America on Trial  
 ● CHOICE: Professor Michael Zander of the London School of Economics introduces a series of televised court cases from the United States and uses the American experience to examine the arguments for introducing the cameras into British courts. Most important trials in the United States are now on television. Some, like the William Kennedy case with rape and drug charges, attract huge television audiences. There is nothing as emotional on British TV programmes, which often edited versions of two trials. The first is of a self-confessed serial killer in Wisconsin. The other concerns a former marine, accused of manslaughter. He pleaded post traumatic stress disorder arising from his service in Vietnam. The programme also features a discussion about the televising of court proceedings, with views from the prosecution and opponents, including Janet Delaney of *The Times* (21/2/93)

12.45am Film: *The Prisoner of Shark Island* (1936, b/w) starring Warner Baxter. Intriguing and untypical John Ford drama about the doctor who treated Abraham Lincoln's assassin (73061)

Secret Identity (2164  
(3308047) 2.50 Car

[illegible]

# RADIO 4

0.55

Stereo on FM

0.55

Shipping Forecast 6.00

0.55

News Briefing 6.10 Farming

0.55

Week 6.50 Prayer for the Day

6.55

Weather 7.00 Today, incl.

7.00-7.30

8.30 News

7.30-7.55

8.50 Sports

7.55

Weather

8.50

News

8.55

Sport on 4, with Cliff Morgan

9.30

News

9.30

Interview: Hedy and her

9.30

travel news with Ken Bruce

9.55

News: Loose Ends:

9.55

Conversation with Ned Sherrin

9.55

and guests (a)

11.00

News: The Week in

11.00

Westminster: Michael White,

11.00

political editor of The

11.00

Observer, presents a personal

11.00

view of the week's political

11.00

comings and goings

11.30

From Our Own

11.30

Correspondents

12.00

Midday Music Box

12.25

Just a Moment Nicholas

12.25

Persons hosts the fast-

12.25

turning panel game (a)

12.55

Weather

1.00

News

1.10

Any Questions? Jonathan

1.10

Miller is joined in

1.10

Portsmouth by Mary Golding,

1.10

journalist and economist

1.10

Michael Howard, MP,

1.10

the gallery attendants,

1.10

introduce some of the

1.10

art exhibits (a)

6.50

Shipping 6.55 Weather

6.50

News: Sports Round-up

6.25

Week Ending: A satirical

6.25

review of the week's news (a)

6.25

(1)

6.50

Ad Lib

6.50

Kaleidoscope: Conjuging Up

6.50

Cent. A report on the

6.50

Week National Opera

6.50

preparations for Debussy's

6.50

Passes et Méliandre (a)

7.50

CHOICE: Buddenbrooks

7.50

a CHOICE: Radio 4's

7.50

Saturday night family sage

7.50

sport, vacated by the Forsytes

7.50

last year, is now filled by

7.50

Thomas Mann's

7.50

Buddenbrooks, the German

7.50

bourgeois family, whose

7.50

decline over four generations

7.50

is being charted over the next

7.50

six weeks. The job of putting a

7.50

quint into a pint pot has fallen

7.50

to adapter John Pearscock. He

7.50

is no stranger to this sort of

7.50

thing, having succeeded in the

7.50

cosmopolitan of *fin de siècle*

7.50

Paris into his play sequence

7.50

of the *Moulin Rouge*.

7.50

Episode one, starting in 1836,

7.50

and with Harriet Walter's

**1.55 Shipping Forecast**  
**2.00 News: Any One?** 4011  
Questions? (or 071-560) 4111

**2.30 Saturday Playhouse:**  
Raking, Michael Dibdin's  
new novel, directed by  
Gregory Evans (s)

**4.00 News: Age to Age:** In the first  
of a new series, David Starkey  
recalls the troubled days of  
Elizabeth I, while Sir Street  
looks back, to rather more  
recent history - the first year  
of the reign of Queen  
Elizabeth I

**4.30 Science News:** A report on the  
annual meeting of the  
American Association for the  
Advancement of Science

**6.00 Second to None:**  
Performers, Sara Parker talks  
to an escapologist and a  
children's entertainer (3 of 4)

**5.25 News:** from the Prime Minister,  
the Home Secretary, the  
Walesa Collection, and John

**5.55** In the first of  
four programmes, Sir  
Humphrys talks to people who  
have cared, during his  
wars, Bruce Gyngall,  
chairman of TV-am, but his  
licence to broadcast (r)

**8.50 Music in Mind (s)**  
**9.50 Ten to Ten (s)** 9.50 Weather

**10.15 My Fanny Valentine:** Jimmy  
Mullville takes a look at the  
romantic and not-so-romantic  
side of St Valentine's day (r)  
Travel with the stars  
**10.45** Brian goes travelling via the  
writings of Mrs Frances  
Trollope, mother of novelist  
Anthony Trollope (1 of 5)

**11.00 Richard Briers Presents**  
Notes with conductor Is  
Lemare (s) (r)

**11.30 The Nick Russell Show:**  
Notes written by and starring  
Nick Russell (s and r)

**12.00-12.45am News, Int 12.28**  
**Weather 12.33 Shipping**  
**Forecast 12.43 World Service**  
**(LW only)**

**FREQUENCIES:** Radio 1: 1053kHz/225m; 1089kHz/275m; FM 97.6-98.8. Radio  
4: 1618-90.2. Radio 5: 1215kHz/ 247m; FM 90.2-92.4. Radio 4:  
99.9kHz/ FM 94.4-94.6. Radio 5: 683kHz/433m; 90.2-93.3m; 129C